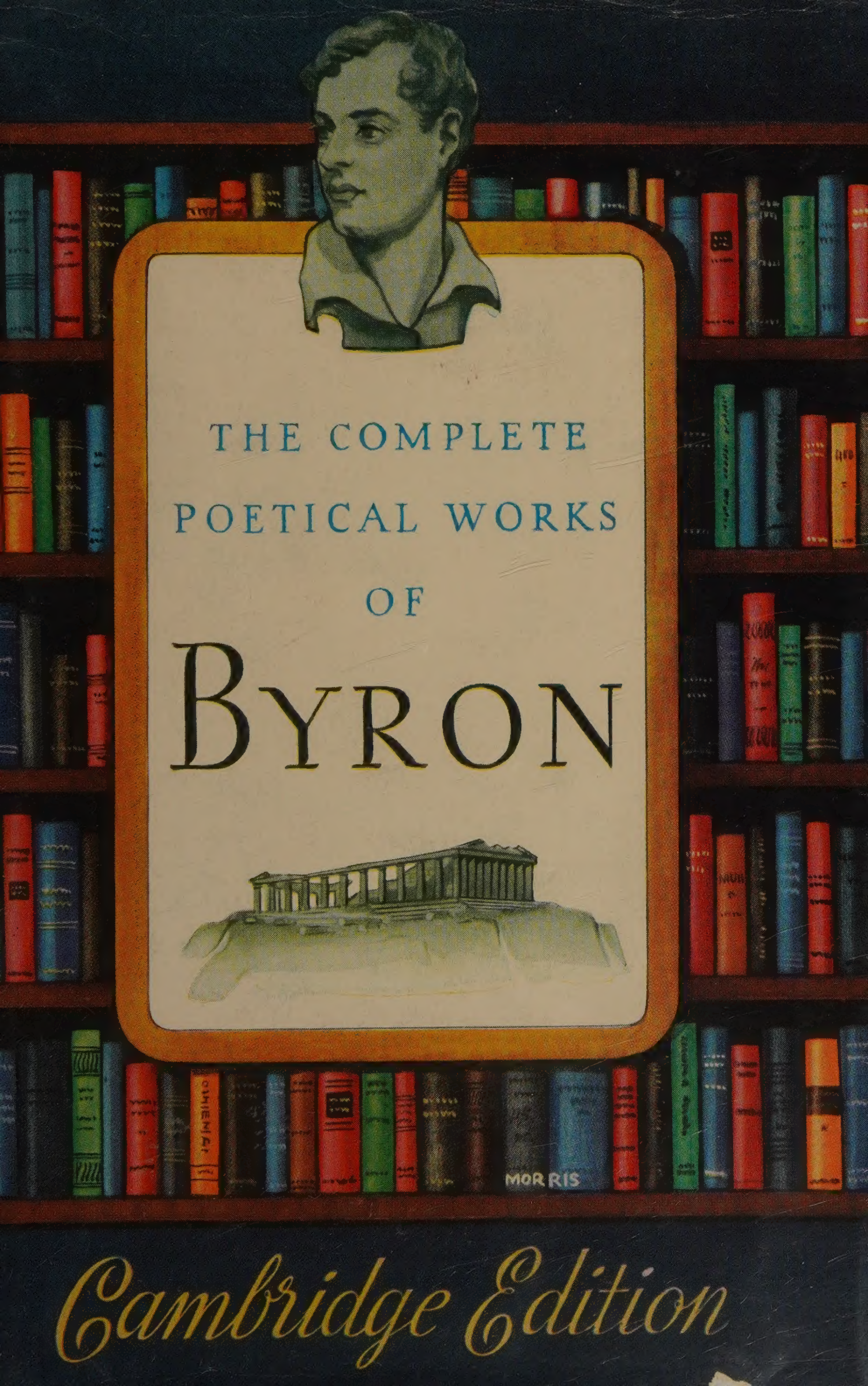


THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF BYRON

Cambridge Edition

The Complete Works of

Byron

'The two master traits of Byron's genius are the revolutionary spirit and classical art. He was both of his age and apart from it. . . . On one side of his character he was drawn toward the romantic spirit of the day, but on the other side his sympathies, conscious and unconscious, threw him back upon the more classical models of the past.

'His aggressive free-thinking, which so shocked his contemporaries, can scarcely do more than elicit a smile today; the grossly sensual passages in his poems are few, and these are more outspoken than seductive; his sneers are mostly for cant and hypocrisy. Byron treated almost exclusively those simple, fundamental passions which are most compatible with predominance of intellect and breadth of expression. His own human passions were so strong, his life was so vigorous, that from personal experience he was able to accomplish more than most others whose sympathies might be wider. What masterly pictures he has drawn of love and hate, of patriotism, honor, disdain, sarcasm, revenge, remorse, despair, awe, and mockery!' *Paul E. More*

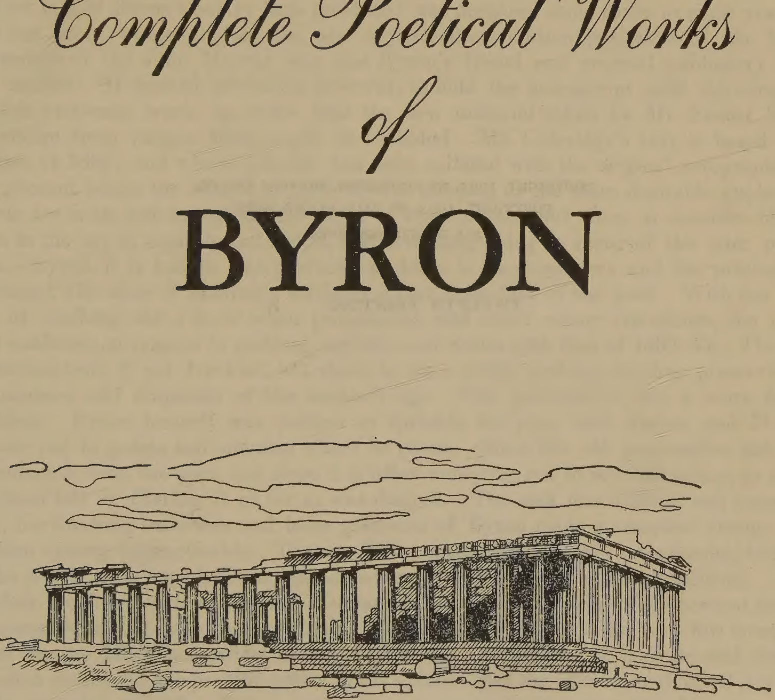
Jacket by John V. Morris

WITHDRAWN

The Cambridge Poets

	edited by
BROWNING	Horace E. Scudder
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING	Harriet Waters Preston
BURNS	W. E. Henley
BYRON	Paul E. More
CHAUCER	F. N. Robinson
DRYDEN	George R. Noyes
ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS	Helen Child Sargent, George L. Kittredge
HOLMES	Horace E. Scudder
KEATS	Horace E. Scudder
LONGFELLOW	Horace E. Scudder
AMY LOWELL	—
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL	Horace E. Scudder
MILTON	Harris Francis Fletcher
POPE	Henry W. Boynton
SCOTT	Horace E. Scudder
SHAKESPEARE	William Allan Neilson
SHELLEY	George E. Woodberry
SPENSER	R. E. Neil Dodge
TENNYSON	William J. Rolfe
THOREAU	Henry Seidel Canby
WHITTIER	Horace E. Scudder
WORDSWORTH	A. J. George

The
Complete Poetical Works
of
BYRON



The Acropolis

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY BOSTON

Cambridge Edition

The Riverside Press Cambridge

COPYRIGHT, 1905, BY HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND CO.
COPYRIGHT, 1933, BY PAUL ELMER MORE
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

TWELFTH PRINTING R

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE . MASSACHUSETTS
PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The text of Byron's poetry here presented was prepared some seven or eight years ago, and the notes written, before the new seven-volume edition published by Mr. Murray (grandson of the John Murray who was Byron's friend and original publisher) was on the market. It seemed advisable, however, to hold the manuscript until the completion of this elaborate work, in order that the new material taken by Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge from various MSS. might be included. Mr. Coleridge's text is based on the edition of 1831; and where possible has been collated with the original autographs. By the present editor the edition of 1832–33 was adopted as the more desirable guide. The words are with few exceptions the same in both sources, but there is considerable variance in the use of capitals and italics, the advantage being in favor of the later publication. Byron, it is known, was perfectly reckless in these matters, and the printed texts represent the taste of Murray's advisers rather than that of the poet. With the exception of marking the è in *ed* when pronounced, and other minor alterations, the present text conforms in respect to spelling, capitals, and italics with that of 1832–33. The usage is inconsistent, if not freakish, but there is some profit, perhaps, in thus preserving the atmosphere and emphasis of the author's age. The punctuation was a more difficult problem. Byron himself was content to sprinkle his page with dashes, and Murray's printer put in points and commas where he chose. Since the old punctuation did not at all emanate from the poet, and since it is often annoying, not to say misleading, no scruple has been felt in altering it as far as was desired. The task was difficult and unsatisfactory, for the long sentences and loose grammar of Byron made a complete change to the modern system impracticable. The result is a somewhat arbitrary compromise, but offers to the reader, it is hoped, fewer obstacles than he will meet in any other edition.

After the completion of the new Murray edition the manuscript of the present text was compared with that word for word, and advantage was taken of the very few corrections based on the MSS. accessible to Mr. Coleridge. In general it may be said that this collation confirmed the present editor in his opinion that the edition of 1832–33 is a better guide than that of 1831. But it would be ungenerous to slur over the obligation to that monumental undertaking, and in particular acknowledgment is due (and, in each specific case, given) for the new material there for the first time printed.

In the arrangement of the poems two things were aimed at — chronology and convenience. An absolute ordering in accordance with chronology is practically impossible; it would necessitate, for instance, the insertion of a mass of stuff between the two parts of *Childe Harold*, and would result in other obvious absurdities. A compromise was therefore adopted. The poems are arranged in groups, — *Childe Harold*, Shorter Poems, Satires, Tales, Italian Poems, Dramas, *Don Juan*, — and these groups are placed in general chronological sequence. In this way it is easy to perceive how Byron's manner passed from *genre* to *genre* as his genius developed. Within each group the poems follow strictly the date of composition, or, when this is unknown, the date of publication.

The notes, owing to the size of the volume, are confined to such points as are necessary for rendering the text intelligible. Byron was already well annotated, and large use has been made of the traditional matter handed down from the editions published immediately after the poet's death. The language of these notes has been adopted, or adapted, without scruple. Some assistance, too, has been derived from the investigations of Mr. Coleridge; yet with all these helps no slight amount of labor has been expended by the present editor in the pursuit of accuracy and serviceability. Almost all of Byron's own notes have been taken over. But the long excursions, which were appended to *Childe Harold* and some of the other poems, have been omitted. These were, in part, the work of Hobhouse, and for the rest belong with Byron's prose works rather than with his verse. They would only increase the bulk of the volume without adding appreciably to its value.

In both the body of the book and the notes, all matter not proceeding from Byron himself is inclosed in square brackets.

P. E. M.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH xi
CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE 1

SHORTER POEMS.

HOURS OF IDLENESS.

On the Death of a Young Lady 84
To E—— 85
To D—— 85
Epitaph on a Friend 85
A Fragment. 'When, to their airy hall, my fathers' voice' 85
On Leaving Newstead Abbey 86
Lines written in 'Letters to an Italian Nun and an English Gentleman: by J. J. Rousseau: founded on Facts' 86
Adrian's Address to his Soul when Dying 87
Translation from Catullus. Ad Lesbiam 87
Translation of the Epitaph on Virgil and Tibullus 87
Imitation of Tibullus 87
Translation from Catullus 87
Imitated from Catullus 88
Translation from Horace 88
From Anacreon 88
From Anacreon 88
From the Prometheus Vinctus of Æschylus 89
To Emma 89
To M. S. G. 90
To Caroline 90
To Caroline 90
To Caroline 91
To Caroline 91
Stanzas to a Lady, with the Poems of Camoëns 92
The First Kiss of Love 92
On a Change of Masters at a Great Public School 93
To the Duke of Dorset 93
Fragment written shortly after the Marriage of Miss Chaworth 95
Granta — A Medley 95
On a Distant View of the Village and School of Harrow on the Hill 96
To M—— 97
To Woman 97
To M. S. G. 97
To Mary, on Receiving her Picture 98
To Lesbia 98
Lines addressed to a Young Lady 99
Love's Last Adieu 99
PAGE
Damætas 100
To Marion 100
To a Lady 101
Oscar of Alva 101
The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus 105
Translation from the Medea of Euripides 111
Thoughts suggested by a College Examination 111
To a Beautiful Quaker 112
The Cornelian 113
An Occasional Prologue 113
On the Death of Mr. Fox 114
The Tear 114
Reply to Some Verses of J. M. B. Pigot, Esq., on the Cruelty of his Mistress 115
To the Sighing Strephon 116
To Eliza 116
Lachin y Gair 117
To Romance 118
Answer to Some Elegant Verses 118
Elegy on Newstead Abbey 119
Childish Recollections 122
Answer to a Beautiful Poem, entitled 'The Common Lot' 127
Remembrance 128
To a Lady who presented the Author with the Velvet Band which bound her Tresses 128
Lines addressed to the Rev. J. T. Becher 128
The Death of Calmar and Orla 129
L'Amitié est l'Amour sans Ailes 131
The Prayer of Nature 132
To Edward Noel Long, Esq. 133
To a Lady 134
'I would I were a careless child' 135
'When I roved a young Highlander' 135
To George, Earl Delawarr 136
To the Earl of Clare 137
Lines written beneath an Elm in the Churchyard of Harrow 138

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

Translation from Anacreon 139
Ossian's Address to the Sun in 'Carthon' 139
A Version of Ossian's Address to the Sun 140
Pignus Amoris 140
To a Knot of Ungenerous Critics 141
Soliloquy of a Bard in the Country 142
To —— 143

On the Eyes of Miss A—— H—— 143
Stanzas to Jessy 143
Egotism. A Letter to J. T. Becher 144
Queries to Casuists 145
The Adieu 145
To a Vain Lady 146
To Anne 147
To the Same 147
To the Author of a Sonnet beginning, '"Sad is my verse," you say, "and yet no tear"' . 147
On Finding a Fan 148
Farewell to the Muse . . 148
To an Oak at Newstead . . 149
On Revisiting Harrow . . 150
To my Son 150
Song. 'Breeze of the night,' etc. 150
To Harriet 151
'Farewell! if ever fondest prayer' 151
'Bright be the place of thy soul' 151
'When we two parted' . . 151
'There was a time, I need not name' 152
'And wilt thou weep when I am low?' 152
'Remind me not, remind me not' 152
To a Youthful Friend . . 153
Lines inscribed upon a Cup formed from a Skull 153
Inscription on the Monument of a Newfoundland Dog . . 154
'Well! thou art happy' . . 154
To a Lady, on being asked my Reason for Quitting England in the Spring 155
'Fill the goblet' 155
Stanzas to a Lady on Leaving England 156
Lines to Mr. Hodgson. . . 156
Lines written in an Album, at Malta 157
To Florence 157
Stanzas composed during a Thunder-Storm 158
Stanzas written in Passing the Ambracian Gulf 159
'The spell is broke, the charm is flown' 159
The Girl of Cadiz . . . 159
Written after Swimming from Sestos to Abydos . . . 160
'Maid of Athens, ere we part' 160
Fragment from the 'Monk of Athos' 161
Lines written beneath a Picture 161
Substitute for an Epitaph . . 161
Translation of the Famous Greek War Song, *Δεῦτε παῖδες τῶν Ἑλλήνων* 161
Translation of the Romaic Song, *Μπένω μεσ' τὸ περιβόλι, 'Ωραιοτάτη Χαηδή* 162
Lines written in the Travellers' Book at Orchomenus . . 162
On Parting 162
Epitaph for Joseph Blacket . 163
Farewell to Malta . . . 163
Newstead Abbey 164
Epistle to a Friend . . . 164
To Thyrza 165
'Away, away, ye notes of woe!' 165
'One struggle more, and I am free' 166
Euthanasia 166
'And thou art dead, as young and fair' 167
Lines to a Lady Weeping . . 168
'If sometimes in the haunts of men' 168
On a Cornelian Heart which was broken 168
'The chain I gave' 168
Lines written on a Blank Leaf of the 'Pleasures of Memory' 169
Address spoken at the Opening of Drury-Lane Theatre . . . 169
Parenthetical Address . . 170
Verses found in a Summer-House at Hales-Owen 171
'Remember thee! remember!' . 171
To Time 171
Translation of a Romaic Love Song 172
'Thou art not false, but thou art fickle' 172
On being asked what was the 'Origin of Love' 173
On the Quotation, 'And my true faith can alter never,' etc. 173
To the Hon. Mrs. George Lamb . 173
[La Revanche] 174
'Remember him whom passion's power' 174
Impromptu, in Reply to a Friend 174
Sonnet, To Genevra 175
Sonnet, To the Same . . . 175
From the Portuguese. 'Tu mi chamas' 175
The Devil's Drive 175
[Love and Gold] 179
Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte 180
Stanzas for Music. 'I speak not,' etc. 182
Address intended to be recited at the Caledonian Meeting . 182
Condolatory Address to Sarah Countess of Jersey . . . 183
Elegiac Stanzas on the Death of Sir Peter Parker, Bart. . 183
Julian [A Fragment] . . . 184
To Belshazzar 185
Stanzas for Music. 'There's not a joy,' etc. 185
Stanzas. 'I heard thy fate without a tear' 186
Napoleon's Farewell . . . 186
From the French. 186
Ode from the French . . . 187
Stanzas for Music. 'There be none of Beauty's daughters' . 188
On the Star of 'The Legion of Honour' 188
Darkness 189
Churchill's Grave 190

Prometheus 191
A Fragment. 'Could I remount,' etc. 191
Sonnet to Lake Leman . . . 192
Monody on the Death of the Right Hon. R. B. Sheridan . 192
A Very Mournful Ballad on the Siege and Conquest of Alhama 194
Translation from Vittorelli . 195
Venice 196
On Sam Rogers 196
The Duel 197
Stanzas to the Po 198
Sonnet on the Nuptials of the Marquis Antonio Cavalli with the Countess Clelia Rasponi of Ravenna 199
Sonnet to the Prince Regent on the Repeal of Lord Edward Fitzgerald's Forfeiture . . 199
Stanzas. 'Could Love for ever' 199
Ode to a Lady whose Lover was killed by a Ball, which at the Same Time shivered a Portrait next his Heart 200
The Irish Avatar 201
Stanzas written on the Road between Florence and Pisa . . 204
Stanzas to a Hindoo Air . . 204
To —— 205
To the Countess of Blessington 205
Aristomenes 205
[Love and Death] 205
Last Words on Greece . . . 206
On this Day I complete my Thirty-sixth Year 206

DOMESTIC PIECES.

Fare thee well 207
A Sketch 208
Stanzas to Augusta 209
Stanzas to Augusta 210
Epistle to Augusta 210
Lines on Hearing that Lady Byron was Ill 212
The Dream 213

HEBREW MELODIES.

'She walks in beauty' . . . 216
'The harp the monarch minstrel swept' 216
'If that high world' 217
'The wild gazelle' 217
'Oh! weep for those' 217
'On Jordan's banks' 217
Jephtha's Daughter 218
'Oh! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom' 218
'My soul is dark' 218
'I saw thee weep' 218
'Thy days are done' 218
Song of Saul before his Last Battle 219
Saul 219
'All is vanity, saith the preacher' 219
'When coldness wraps this suffering clay' 220
Vision of Belshazzar 220
'Sun of the sleepless' . . . 220
'Were my bosom as false as thou deem'st it to be' 221
Herod's Lament for Mariamne 221
On the Day of the Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus . . 221
By the Rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept 222
The Destruction of Sennacherib 222
'A spirit pass'd before me.' From Job 222
'In the valley of waters' . 222
Stanzas for Music. 'They say that Hope is happiness' . . . 223

EPHEMERAL VERSES.

Epigram on an Old Lady who had Some Curious Notions respecting the Soul 223
[To Dives (William Beckford). A Fragment] 223
Epitaph on John Adams, of Southwell 224
Farewell Petition to J. C. H., Esq. 224
'Oh how I wish that an embargo' 225
'Youth, Nature, and relenting Jove' 225
'Good plays are scarce' . . 225
'What news, what news? Queen Orraca' 225
An Ode to the Framers of the Frame Bill 225
[R. C. Dallas] 226
'Oh you, who in all names can tickle the town' 226
'When Thurlow this damn'd nonsense sent' 226
To Lord Thurlow 227
Answer to ——'s Professions of Affection 227
Fragment of an Epistle to Thomas Moore 227
Windsor Poetics 228
On a Royal Visit to the Vaults 228
Ich dien 228
'Here's to her who long' . 228
'Once fairly set out on his party of pleasure' 228
'In this beloved marble view' . 229
'And dost thou ask the reason of my sadness?' 229
'As the Liberty lads o'er the sea' 229
'So we'll go no more a roving' 229
'I read the "Christabel"' . 230
'To hook the reader, you, John Murray' 230
'God maddens him whom 'tis his will to lose' 230
'My boat is on the shore' . 230
'No infant Sotheby, whose dauntless head' 231
'Dear Doctor, I have read your play' 23

'My dear Mr. Murray' . . . 232
[E Nihilo Nihil; or an Epigram Bewitched] . . . 232
On the Birth of John William Rizzo Hoppner . . . 233
Ballad to the Tune of 'Sally in our Alley' . . . 233
Another Simple Ballat . . . 234
'Strahan, Tonson, Lintot of the times' . . . 234
'If for silver, or for gold' . . . 234
Epilogue . . . 234
'Here's a happy new year! but with reason' . . . 235
New Song to the Tune of 'Whare hae ye been a' day,' etc. . . . 235
'Would you go to the House by the true gate' . . . 236
'You ask for a "Volume of Nonsense"' . . . 236
'When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home' . . . 236
Endorsement to the Deed of Separation, in the April of 1816 236
To Penelope, January 2, 1821 . . . 236
'Through life's dull road, so dim and dirty' . . . 236
'The braziers, it seems, are preparing to pass' . . . 236
Thoughts for a Speech of Lucifer, in the Tragedy of 'Cain' 237
Bowles and Campbell . . . 237
Elegy . . . 237
'The world is a bundle of hay' 237
'Brave Champions! go on with the farce' . . . 237
'Who kill'd John Keats?' . . . 237
From the French . . . 237
'For Orford and for Waldegrave' . . . 238
'What matter the pangs of a husband and father' . . . 238
[Napoleon's Snuff-Box] . . . 238
Epigrams . . . 238
The New Vicar of Bray . . . 238
Lucietta. A Fragment . . . 239
Martial. Lib. I. Epig. I. . . . 239
The Conquest . . . 239
Impromptu . . . 239
Journal in Cephalonia . . . 240
Song to the Suliotes . . . 240

SATIRES.

English Bards and Scotch Reviewers . . . 241
Hints from Horace . . . 256
The Curse of Minerva . . . 268
The Waltz . . . 272
The Blues . . . 277
The Vision of Judgment . . . 283
The Age of Bronze; or, Carmen Seculare et Annus haud Mirabilis . . . 298

TALES, CHIEFLY ORIENTAL.

The Giaour . . . 310
The Bride of Abydos . . . 323
The Corsair . . . 337
Lara . . . 366
The Siege of Corinth . . . 384
Parisina . . . 396
The Prisoner of Chillon . . . 402
Mazeppa . . . 406
The Island; or, Christian and his Comrades . . . 415

ITALIAN POEMS.

The Lament of Tasso . . . 436
Beppo . . . 440
Ode on Venice . . . 452
The Prophecy of Dante . . . 455
The Morgante Maggiore of Pulci 465
Francesca of Rimini . . . 476

DRAMAS.

Manfred . . . 478
Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice 497
Sardanapalus . . . 550
The Two Foscari . . . 595
Cain . . . 626
Heaven and Earth . . . 655
Werner; or, The Inheritance . 671
The Deformed Transformed . 722
DON JUAN . . . 744
NOTES . . . 1001
INDEX OF FIRST LINES . . . 1047
INDEX OF TITLES . . . 1051

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The main events of our poet's life are so well known that they may be rehearsed here with the utmost brevity. George Gordon was born in London, January 22, 1788. His mother's family, the Gordons, whose name he took owing to the will of a maternal ancestor, was Scottish but of French extraction. His father, Captain Byron, belonged to an ancient noble family which came to England with William the Conqueror. The poet's pride of ancestry was always one of the strongest traits of his character, mingled as it was, as in his hero Marino Faliero, with sincere republican feelings. The boy was born with a club foot, and this slight deformity had much to do with the waywardness of his disposition. Captain Byron soon dissipated most of his wife's fortune and then left her in liberty. In 1790 she removed to Aberdeen with her child, and the poet's early recollections were thus colored by his life in the Scottish Highlands. His first schooling was at Aberdeen, and later he was sent to Harrow. Meanwhile, the death of the old Lord Byron at Newstead Abbey gave him the title, at the age of ten, in default of nearer heirs. This fifth Lord Byron, whom the poet succeeded, left him, besides the title, a disagreeable family feud. He had, under suspicious circumstances, killed his neighbor and kinsman, Mr. Chaworth, in a duel. The poet afterwards was to fall in love with Chaworth's grandniece, the Mary whose name occurs so often throughout the poems. The brother of the fifth baron was the poet's grandfather, the celebrated Admiral John Byron, a bold but unfortunate seaman whose narrative of a shipwreck formed the groundwork of the great description in the second canto of *Don Juan*.

From Harrow Byron went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he led a reckless and defiant life. Like many a better man and worse poet, he left without taking a degree. His drinking cup, made of a human skull, and his savage pets were notorious. His days were now passed chiefly at Newstead and in London. On coming of age he presented himself at the House of Lords, and even thought of taking up a political career. The report of his speeches later on and his cleverness as a pamphleteer suggest that, had he persisted, he might have made his mark in this field. But the spirit of adventure seized him. June 11, 1809, he left London with his friend Hobhouse and for two years traveled, passing through Portugal and Spain, where he was much impressed by the results of the Peninsular War, and wandering extensively in Greece and the Levant. He returned to England in July of 1811, with his head full of romantic notions. The first two cantos of *Childe Harold* and the Oriental Tales were the product of his travels, and immediately raised him into astonishing popularity. His life in London was now a union of social dissipation and feverish work. January 2, 1815, came his unfortunate marriage with Miss Milbanke, who, after the lapse of a year, separated from him, taking with her their infant daughter, Augusta Ada. Into the causes and mysteries of the divorce we may not enter. Byron was wild and his wife was a prude; it would seem that nothing more should need be said.

The public violently, and to a certain extent rightly, sided with Lady Byron, and the poet found it necessary to quit England. He sailed April 25, 1816, never to see his native land again. His greatest comfort seems to have been the loyal affection of his half-sister, Lady Augusta Leigh. Byron journeyed to Switzerland by way of the Rhine, and there, on the banks of Lake Geneva, joined Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, with whom he was associated at intervals for a number of years. With the Shelleys was Jane Clairmont, a relative of Mary's, who became the mother of Byron's natural daughter Allegra. In the autumn of 1816 Byron made a tour through the Alps and then went down to Venice. Here his life for a while assumed a character of mad dissipation which is only too faithfully reflected in his letters. His salvation, if satiety and innate repugnance were not sufficient, came from an alliance formed after the Italian fashion of the day with the Countess Guiccioli, who remained a faithful companion to him during all the rest of his stay in Italy. Very soon, however, Byron began to interest himself in the revolutionary movements then stirring in Greece. At last he resolved to stake his fortune (the large income from his pen) and his life on that cause. On the 14th of July, 1823, he sailed for Greece, and at Missolonghi put himself at the head of the republican forces. Death seemed to envy the noblest of his acts. April 19, 1824, he died, honored and lamented by those about him. His body was carried to England and buried near Newstead, in the church of Hucknall-Torkard.

Much that might throw light on Byron's works is here omitted, and, despite all that has been written on the subject, there is still room and need for a sympathetic study of his character. For one thing the basis of his character was undoubtedly a proud sincerity, yet his acts and words wore often the appearance of sham. To discriminate between that sincerity and that sham, and to show how they were related, would be as rich an exercise of psychology as a man might desire. But for an introduction to Byron's works there would seem to be still greater need of some discussion of the poems themselves and of the qualities which have made them, for almost a century, the object of opprobrium and of equally extravagant laudation. Manifestly the elements of his genius are diverse, to a certain extent even contradictory; and to this fact are due in part the extraordinary unevenness of his own work and the curious divergence of opinion regarding him.

In a word, the two master traits of Byron's genius are the revolutionary spirit and classical art. He was both of his age and apart from it, and if, in the following pages, an attempt is made to throw the composite nature of his genius into relief by contrasting him with the men who were more purely the product of the times, with Shelley in particular, this is not done through a feeling of narrow rivalry, but because in no other way may we so easily prepare ourselves for a right understanding, and hence a right enjoyment, of his work. On one side of his character he was drawn toward the romantic spirit of the day, but on the other side his sympathies, conscious and unconscious, threw him back upon the more classical models of the past. By classical is meant a certain predominance of the intellect over the emotions, and a reliance on broad effects rather than on subtle impressions; these two characteristics working harmoniously together and being subservient to human interest. And here straightway we may seem to run counter to a well-established criticism of Byron. It will be remembered that Matthew Arnold has quoted and judiciously enlarged upon Goethe's saying, 'The moment he reflects, he is a child.' The dictum is perfectly true, but more often he is a child because he fails to reflect at all. Predominance of intellect does not necessarily imply true wisdom; for in reality an impulsive, restless activity of mind seems often to militate against calm reflection. It implies in Byron rather keenness of wit, pungency of criticism whether sound or false, precision and unity of conception. So, in the *English Bards*, the ruinous criticism of Wordsworth, 'that mild apostate from poetic rule,' is the expression of an irresistible mental impulse, but it is hardly reflection. When the poet came to reflect on his satire, he wisely added the comment, 'unjust.' When in *Childe Harold* he describes Gibbon as 'sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer,' he displays astonishing intellectual force in summing up the effect of a huge work in one sharp memorable phrase, such as can scarcely be paralleled from the poetry of his age. And in this case he is by chance right; reflection could not modify or improve the judgment.

In its larger effect this predominance of intellect causes simplicity and tangibility of design. Thus, on reading *Manfred*, we feel that a single and very definite idea has been grasped and held throughout; and we in turn receive a single and definite impression which we readily carry away and reproduce in memory. But turn to Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* and mark the difference. However much the ordinary reader may admire this drama, it is doubtful whether he could give any satisfactory account of its central idea, for the reason that this idea has been diverted and refracted through the medium of a wayward imagination and is after all an illusion of the senses. Love, all-embracing victorious love, is in a sense the motive of the poem; yet the most superficial analysis will show this to be an emotion or vague state of feeling, rather than a distinct conception of the intellect. The inconsistencies bewilder the reader, although, on a rapid perusal, they may escape his critical detection. Love is the theme, yet the speeches are full of the gall of hatred: in words Prometheus may forgive his enemy, but the animus of the poem is unrelenting bitterness.

Yet the predominance of intellect, which forms so important a factor in classical art, is far from excluding all emotion. On the contrary, the simple elemental passions naturally provoke intense activity of mind. They almost inevitably, moreover, lead to an art that depends on broad effects instead of subtle and vague impressions. The passion of Byron is good evidence of this tendency. He himself somewhere remarks that his genius was eloquent rather than poetical, and in a sense this observation is true. His language has a marvelous sweep and force that carry the reader on through a sustained emotion, but in detail it is prosaic in comparison with the iridescent style of Shelley or of Keats. *Marino Faliero*, one of Byron's less important works, may be cited as a fair example of his eloquence and concentrated passion. The theme of the drama is perfectly simple, — the conflict in Marino's breast between aristocratic pride and the love of liberty (predominant characteristics, be it observed, of the poet himself); and about this conflict the whole action of the play revolves, without any minor issues to dissipate the effect. The mind is held gripped to one emotion and one thought; we seem to hear the mighty pleading of a Demosthenes. There is no poem of Shelley's (with the possible exception of *The Cenci*, where he resorts to monstrous and illegitimate means) which begins to leave on the mind so distinct and powerful an impression as this, yet the whole drama contains perhaps not a single line of the illusive charm to be found in passages on every page of Shelley's works. We know from Byron's letters and prefaces that he made a conscious effort to be, as he himself calls it, classical in this respect. Had his genius possessed also the subtle grace of the more romantic writers, he would have been classical in a still higher and broader sense; for the greatest poets, the true classics, Homer as well as Shakespeare, have embraced both gifts. As it is, we are left to contrast the vigorous, though incomplete, art of Byron with the wayward and often effeminate style of his rivals. And in this we are justified by the known hostility of Byron to the tendencies of his age and by the utterances of the romantic writers, from whom a volume of quotations might be culled showing that they deliberately look on poetry as a vehicle for the emotions and imaginations of the heart alone.

It was in no mood of mere carping at the present that Byron condemned the romantic spirit, and waged continuous, if often indiscreet, warfare for Milton and Dryden and Pope.

His indifference to Shakespeare (if we may believe his critical statements; in reality no writer was ever more steeped in Shakespearian language) proves the sincerity of his opinion, however it may expose the narrowness of his judgment. He perceived clearly a real kinship, on one side of his genius, with the writers of Queen Anne, and was unflagging in his efforts to follow them as models. He was saved from their aridity by the revolutionary spirit, which was equally strong within him, and which he acknowledged by partially condemning himself with his contemporaries.

Were the subject not too technical, the radical difference between these two classes of poets might be shown by a study of their respective use of metaphor. Poetry hardly exists without metaphor. Besides the formal simile, there is in verse the more pervasive use of metaphorical language, by which the whole world of animate and inanimate nature is brought into kinship with the human soul, so that our inner life is enlarged and exalted by a feeling of universal dominion. The classical metaphor is simple and intellectual; through its means the vague is fixed and presented clearly to the mind by comparison with the more definite, the more complex by comparison with the simple, the abstract with the concrete, the emotional with the sensuous. Its rival, the romantic metaphor, appeals to the fancy by the very opposite method. It would be easy to take the *Prometheus Unbound* and show how Shelley persistently relaxes the mind by vague and abstract similes. The moments are said to crawl like '*death*-worms;' spring is compared with the 'memory of a dream,' with 'genius,' or 'joy which riseth up as from the earth;' the rushing avalanche is likened to 'thought by thought . . . piled up, till some great truth is loosened, and the nations echo round.' In the famous and exquisitely beautiful singing-metaphor of that poem we have in miniature a complete picture of the romantic poet's art: —

'Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions
In music's most serene dominions;
Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.
And we sail on, away, afar,
Without a course, without a star,
But by the instinct of sweet music driven.'

Perhaps nowhere could a more perfect expression of this wayward and delicate spirit of romance be found, unless in that brief phrase of *A Winter's Tale*: —

'a wild dedication of yourselves
To unpath'd waters, undream'd shores.'

Take away this subtle and baffling overgrowth of reverie, and the sturdier metaphor of the classical poets remains. Individual comparisons of this vague character may no doubt be cited from Byron (they are not altogether wanting even in Homer), but they are in him distinctly exceptions. In general the poetic medium in which he works has an intellectual solidity akin to the older masters.

Poetry is the most perfect instrument of expression granted us in our need of self-utterance, and it is something to have learned in what way this instrument is shaped to the hand of a strong poet. But this is not all. How does he deal with the great themes of literature? How does he stand toward nature and man? And here too we shall find a real contrast between Byron and his contemporaries.

There is a scene in Mrs. Gaskell's *Cranford* which to me has always seemed to set forth one of the aims of the romantic nature-poet in a charming light. It is the bewitching chapter where the ladies visit old Mr. Holbrook, the bachelor, and he, musing after dinner in the garden, quotes and comments on Tennyson: —

' " 'The cedar spreads his dark-green layers of shade.'

Capital term — layers! Wonderful man! . . . Why, when I saw the review of his poems in *Blackwood*, I set off within an hour, and walked seven miles to Misselton (for the horses were not in the way) and ordered them. Now, what colour are ash-buds in March?"

'Is the man going mad? thought I. He is very like Don Quixote.

'"What colour are they, I say?" repeated he vehemently.

'"I am sure I don't know, sir," said I, with the meekness of ignorance.

'"I knew you did n't. No more did I — an old fool that I am! — till this young man comes and tells me. Black as ash-buds in March. And I 've lived all my life in the country; more shame for me not to know. Black: they are jet-black, madam."'

Excellent botany, no doubt, and very dainty verse; but I cannot think the fame of the great masters of song depends on such trivialities as this. *Black as ash-buds in March,* — one might read all the famous epics of history without acquiring this curious bit of information. There is a good deal of this petty, prying nature-cult in Keats and Shelley, along with inspiration of a more solid or mystical quality. And it is Wordsworth who chants over the small celandine: —

'Since the day I found thee out,
Little flower! — I 'll make a stir,
Like a great astronomer.'

Some kinship of spirit, some haunting echo of the revolutionary cry, binds us very close to the singers of that age, and we are perforce influenced by their attitude toward the outer world. It would be a matter of curious inquiry to search out the advent of this nature-worship into poetry, and to trace it down through succeeding writers. Its growth and culmination are in a way coincident with the revolutionary period to which Byron belongs, and, like most innovations of the kind, it denotes both an enlargement and a loss of spiritual life. The peculiar form of religious enthusiasm developed in the Middle Ages had wrought out its own idealism. The soul of the individual man seemed to the Christian of that day, as it were, the centre of the world, about which the divine drama of salvation revolved; and on the stand taken by the individual in this drama depended his eternal life. A man's personality became of vast importance in the universal scheme of things, and a new and justifiable egotism of intense activity was born. There was necessarily an element of anguish in this thought of personal importance and insecurity, but on the whole, while faith lasted, it was overbalanced by feelings of joy and peace; for, after all, salvation was within reach. The idealism of such a period found its aim in the perfecting of a man's soul, and humanity in the life of its individual members was the one theme of surpassing interest. The new humanism which came in with the Renaissance modified, but did not entirely displant, this ideal; the faith of the earlier ages remained for a long time intact. But by the closing years of the eighteenth century the ancient illusion of man's personal value in the universe had been rudely shattered; his anchor of faith had been rent away. Then began the readjustment, which is still in progress and is still the cause of so much unrest and tribulation. In place of the individual there arose a new ideal of humanity as a whole, — a very pretty theory for philosophers, but in no wise comforting for the homeless soul of man trained by centuries of introspection to deem himself the chosen vessel of grace. There was a season of revolt. The individual, still bearing his burden of self-importance, and seeing now no restrictive laws to bind him, gave himself to all the wild vagaries of the revolutionary period. Nor is it a matter of chance that Voltaire, the father of modern scepticism, and Rousseau, the first of romantic nature-worshipers, had worked together to this end. It was under this stimulus that those who were unable to silence the inner need amidst the turmoil of action turned to the visible world, seeking there the comfort of an idealism not attainable in the vague abstraction of humanity. The individual found a new solace in reverie, which seemed to make him one with the wide and beneficent realm of nature. The flattering trust in his own eternal personality was undermined, the unsubdued egotism born of the old faith left him solitary amid mankind; he turned for companionship to the new world whose kinship to himself was so newly discovered: —

> 'Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
> In solitude where we are *least* alone;
> A truth, which through our being then doth melt
> And purifies from self: it is a tone,
> The soul and source of music, which makes known
> Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,
> Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
> Binding all things with beauty; — 't would disarm
> The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm.'

An eternal harmony did indeed spring from this new source of music; it was a calculable gain, a new created idealism in poetry. But we should not shut our eyes to the concomitant danger and loss. In this soothing absorption into nature the poet was too apt to forget that, after all, the highest and noblest theme must forever be the struggle of the human soul; he was too ready to substitute vague reverie for honest thought, or to lose his deeper sympathy with man in the eager pursuit of minute phenomena. We are all familiar with the travestied nature-cult that is sapping the vitals of literature to-day. Wordsworth has made a stir over the small celandine and Tennyson has discovered that ash-buds are black in March; the present generation must, for originality, examine the fields with a botanist's lens, while the poor reader, who retains any use of his intellect, is too often reminded of the poet Gray's shrewd witticism, that he learned botany to save himself the labor of thinking. If for no other reason, it is wholesome to point out how Byron in his treatment of nature shows the same breadth and mental scope, the same human sympathy, as characterize his classical use of metaphor.

There is a curious passage in one of Franklin's letters, where the philosopher attempts to prove by experiment that the perception of form is remembered more distinctly than the perception of color. It may very well be that his explanation of this phenomenon is not strictly scientific, but the fact is indisputable. Form and motion of form are clearly defined, intelligible, so to speak; color is illusive and impressionistic. So, it will be remembered, the Greeks were preëminent in their imitation of form; the Renaissance artists excelled in color. Distinctions of this kind are, to be sure, a matter of degree only, but none the less significant for that. Now there are descriptions in Byron of gorgeous coloring, notably in certain stanzas of the Haidée episode; but even here the colors are sharply defined, and there is little of the blending, iridescent light of romance. In general he dwells on form and action in his representation of nature, whereas his contemporaries, and notably Shelley, revel in various colors and shifting tints.

It is curious, in fact, that many who are prone to dignify emotional reverie as thought would ascribe such predominance of intellect to shallowness, just as they would deem the breadth of Byron's natural description to be due to narrowness of observation. You will indeed find in Byron no poems on the small celandine, or the daisy, or the cuckoo, or the nightingale, or the west wind; but you may find pictures of mountains reared like the palaces of nature, of the free bounding ocean, of tempest on sea and storm among the Alps, of the solitary pine woods, of placid Lake Leman, — of all the greater, sublimer aspects of nature, such as can hardly be paralleled elsewhere in English literature.

Byron was too much a child of his age to escape the longing for mystic fellowship with nature which came in with the century and still in milder form troubles mankind. But even here there are in him a firmness and a directness of utterance which distinguish his work from the rhapsodies of the purely romantic writers. Let us by all means retain as a precious and late-won possession this sense of communion with the fair outlying world, but let us at the same time beware of loosening our grip on realities. There is no better palliative for the insidious relaxing sentimentality that lurks in this brooding contemplation than certain well-known passages of *Childe Harold*, such as —

> 'I live not in myself, but I become
> Portion of that around me;'

or,

> 'There is a pleasure in the pathless woods;'

or,

> 'Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake.'

Here again it is the classic element in Byron's art that saves him from shadowy, meaningless words; and he is assisted also by his intense human passions and personality. It has been said that the preponderance of human interest is an essential feature of the classical spirit; and it would have been easy to show that, along with predominance of intellect and breadth, this human interest is everywhere present in Byron's work. But the human element — the egotism, if you choose — is so universally recognized in his character that any detailed exposition of its presence in his poetry may seem superfluous. Only in his treatment of nature, perhaps, ought special attention to be called to this trait, for here most of all he differs from certain of the romantic writers. It is well to remember that now and always 'the proper study of mankind is man.' We need still to reflect on the wise admonition of St. Augustine: 'And men go abroad to gaze at the lofty mountains, and the great waves of the sea, and the wide flowing rivers, and the circle of ocean, and the revolutions of the stars, — and pass themselves, the crowning wonder, by.' This genuine human interest distinguished Byron from the pseudo-classical writers as well, who would etherealize predominance of intellect into inanimate abstractions, — from those thin-blooded poets of the eighteenth century whose art depended on a liberal distribution of capital letters.

At bottom Byron's sympathy is not with nature, but with man, and in the expression of this sympathy he displays the sturdy strength of classical art. Théophile Gautier, in his study of Villon, has a clever appeal for the minor bards. 'The most highly vaunted passages of the poets,' he says, 'are ordinarily commonplaces. Ten verses of Byron on love, on the brevity of life, or on some other subject equally new, will find more admirers than the strangest vision of Jean Paul or of Hoffmann. This is because very many have been or are in love, and a still greater number are fearful of death; but very few, even in dreams, have beheld the fantastic images of the German story-tellers pass before them.' Gautier himself, as one of the 'fantastics,' may be prejudiced in their favor, but his characterization of Byron is eminently right. It is a fact that the great poets, the classic poets, deal very much with commonplaces, but Gautier should know his Horace well enough to remember that nothing is more difficult than the art of giving to these commonplaces an individual stamp.

Here again it may be wise to turn for a while from the romantic poets who search out the wayward, obscure emotions of the heart to one who treated almost exclusively those simple, fundamental passions which are most compatible with predominance of intellect and breadth of expression. It is said that Byron could never get outside of himself; and this, to a certain extent, is true. He lacked the dramatic art; but, on the other hand, his own human passions were so strong, his life was so vigorous, that from personal experience he was able to accomplish more than most others whose sympathies might be wider. His range is by no means universal, and yet what masterly pictures he has drawn of love and hate, of patriotism, honor, disdain, sarcasm, revenge, remorse, despair, awe, and mockery! If he had touched the passion of love alone, he would still be worthy of study. It is wholesome now and then to descend from the breathless heights where Cythna dwells, and linger by the sea with Haidée, the pure and innocent child of nature. Love in Byron is commonly the beast that enslaves and degrades, or it is the instinctive attraction of youth uncorrupted by the world, that simple self-surrender, unquestioning and unpolluted, which to the aged sight of the wise Goethe and the subtle Renan seemed, after all was said, the best and truest thing in life. Other poets in search of love's mystic shadow have philosophized with Plato or scaled the empyrean with Dante; but rarely in these excursions have they avoided the perils of unreality or self-deception, of inanity or morbidness. There is at least a certain safety in seeing in love the simple animal passion, pure or perverted as the case may be.

And this brings us to the vexed question of Byron's morality. It is not necessary to extenuate his shortcomings in this matter, and yet the evil of his work has been much exaggerated. His aggressive free-thinking, which so shocked his contemporaries, can scarcely do more than elicit a smile to-day; the grossly sensual passages in his poems are few, and these are more outspoken than seductive; his sneers are mostly for cant and hypocrisy, which, God knows, deserved such lashing then even as they do now. And withal his mind was right; he never deceived himself. Many times he alludes to the ruin of his own life, and always he puts his finger upon the real source of the evil, his lack of self-restraint and his revolt from conventions. There is something manly and pathetic at once, not without strange foreboding of what was to come, in these lines from *Childe Harold*: —

'If my fame should be, as my fortunes are,
Of hasty growth and blight, and dull Oblivion bar

'My name from out the temple where the dead
Are honour'd by the nations — let it be,
And light the laurels on a loftier head!
And be the Spartan's epitaph on me,
"Sparta hath many a worthier son than he."
Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor need;
The thorns which I have reap'd are of the tree
I planted, — they have torn me — and I bleed:
I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed.'

In his *Epistle to Augusta*, perhaps the noblest of all his shorter poems, he more explicitly mentions the evil that brought about his ruin: —

'I have been cunning in mine overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe.

'Mine were my faults, and mine be their reward.
My whole life was a contest, since the day
That gave me being, gave me that which marr'd
The gift, — a fate, or will, that walk'd astray.'

One cannot but recall, by way of contrast, the words of Mrs. Shelley in regard to her exalted companion. 'In all Shelley did,' she says, 'he, at the time of doing it, believed himself justified to his own conscience.' This, surely, is the inner falsehood, more deadly, as Plato affirmed, than the spoken lie; and one needs but a little of the Platonic doctrine to believe that in this glozing of evil lies the veritable danger to morals. There is no such insidious disease in Byron's mind.

The errors of Byron, both in conduct and in art, were in fact largely due to the revolutionary spirit which so easily passes into licentiousness. Classical art should result in self-restraint and harmony of form, but to this Byron never attained except spasmodically, almost by accident it should seem. So far he is classical that he almost universally displays predominance of intellect, breadth of treatment, and human interest; but side by side with this principle of limitation runs the other spirit of revolt, producing at times that extraordinary incongruity of effect which has so baffled his later audience. The world, after manifold struggles, had begun to throw off the mediæval ideals. Faith in the infinite and eternal value of the human person, with all its earthly desires and ambitions, with its responsibility to a jealous God, had been rudely shaken; nor had that deeper faith taken hold of the mind wherein this laboring, grasping earthly self is seen to be but a shadow, an obscuration, of something vastly greater hidden in the secret places of the heart. Belief in the divine right of rulers had been burst as an insubstantial bubble, but in the late-born ideal of a humanity bound in brotherhood and striving upward together the individual was very slow to feel the drawing of the new ties; he had revolted from the past, and still felt himself homeless and unattached in the shadowy ideals of the future. In such an age Byron was born, a man of superabundant physical vigor which at any time would have ill brooked restraint, and of mental impetuosity which had by nature something of the tiger in it. He was led at first by the very spirit of the age to glory in physical and mental license and to exaggerate his impatience of restraint; and only by the hard experience of life did he learn, or partly learn, the lesson of moderation. Inevitably his poetry too often reflected his temperament in its lack of discipline.

No one can be more conscious of these deficiencies than the present writer, whose task it has been to read through Byron's works with an editor's questioning eye. His language is often — very often — slipshod, made obscure by interminable anacoluthons, disfigured by frequent lapses into bad grammar. The thought and style of certain poems — *The Prophecy of Dante*, for instance — are so cheap as to render the reading of them a labor of necessity. Yet all this hardly affects his importance for us. We are not likely to learn bad grammar from him, and his dull poems are easily passed over. He wrote, to use his own words, as the tiger leaps; and if he missed his aim, there was no retrieving the failure. We call this lack of artistic conscience, and so it is; but in this at least he followed only too well the guidance of his age. And then, if he often failed, he sometimes hit the mark. There are passages — more than that, there are whole poems — wherein his classical method has dominated the license of revolt sufficiently to achieve almost perfect harmony of form, while retaining the full vigor of his imperious inspiration.

But the inner character of his work was affected even more than his art by the new leaven, and this free expression of the revolutionary spirit lends to some of his poems a psychological interest even beyond their intrinsic value. It is curious, for instance, to compare the effect on the mature mind of *Manfred's* eloquence and sombre misanthropy with the impression left from a first reading of that drama many years ago. What carried away the young enthusiast with passionate sympathy now leaves the reader cold or even provokes a smile. Such platitudes as this: —

'They who know the most
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,
The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life;'

such profundities as 'the gulf of my unfathomed thought,' do not now seem quite the utterances of apocalyptic wisdom. A more critical taste, too, while feeling the superb rush and abandon of the lyrical stanzas, cannot pass lightly over a tame conclusion like — 'now wither!' But, however cold *Manfred's* rhetoric may leave us, we are compelled to admit another and perhaps more enduring value in the poem. Its psychological interest is not easily exaggerated and becomes clear only as we pass out of immediate sympathy with the writer.

Much has been said concerning the relation between *Manfred* and *Faust*, and Byron has more than once been accused of plagiarizing the idea of his poem from the great German. As a matter of fact certain ideas of a philosophical cast were probably inspired directly by a recollection of *Faust*. This talk of the 'tree of Knowledge and the tree of Life,' this pretension to profundities of ineffable science, have about them all the insincerity of borrowed inspiration. But the true theme of *Manfred* is not a philosophical question; the real poem, as Byron himself asserted, came not from reading, but was the immediate outcome of his own life, and Byron's life was the very impersonation of the revolutionary idea, the idea of reckless individual revolt which we have hardly yet outgrown. It is because *Manfred* more than almost any other English poem expresses the longings and ambitions, the revolt and the tragic failure of this idea, that its interest is still so great and must always remain great in any historical survey of literature. Where better can we read the desire of detachment, the longing of the individual to throw off the bonds of social law and make for himself a life apart from the world's life, than in Manfred's boastful words:

'My pang shall find a voice. From my youth upwards
My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men'?

Equally strong is the expression of self-centred pride. When Manfred rebukes the Spirit who claims dominion over his soul, he cries out scornfully: —

'Back to thy hell!
Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel;
Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know:
What I have done is done.'

It is in such words as these that we recognize the vast difference between *Manfred* and *Faust*, not to mention Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*. Of similar nature and growing directly from the revolutionary ideal of personal unrestraint is the longing for union with one kindred soul, — a longing which seems at once impossible and impious, yet inevitable. This is Manfred's love for Astarte, the love of a soul that has violated common human attachments in its loneliness and throws itself with guilty passionateness into one sacrilegious desire of union. And the same loneliness, self-created and still intolerable, speaks in the yearning cry after a more intimate absorption into nature: —

'I said, with men, and with the thoughts of men,
I held but slight communion; but instead,
My joy was in the Wilderness, to breathe
The difficult air of the iced mountain's top,' etc.

And at the last comes the inevitable despair, the necessary failure, expressed in *Manfred* by the vain prayer of oblivion from self. In the end this solitary pride and isolation, this morbid exaltation of our personal existence, become a creation of Frankenstein, from whose oppression we long for deliverance. To the Spirits who offer him dominion and all the joys of the senses the smitten and defiant soul can only cry out for forgetfulness: —

> 'Oblivion, self-oblivion —
> Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms
> Ye offer so profusely what I ask ?'

It is the perfect and ever memorable tragedy of the spirit of revolution, of individual isolation, of unrestraint, of limitless desires, which found in Byron side by side with his classic intelligence its most authentic utterance.

But to do anything like justice to the psychology of Byron would require a separate study in itself; and if the subject is here passed lightly over, this is because it seems, on the whole, less important to-day than the analysis of his art. Every one recognizes at a glance the tormented personality and the revolutionary leaven in Byron's spirit; not every one, perhaps, would comprehend immediately the extraordinary result produced by the union of these with his classical method, — a result so peculiar as alone to lend permanent interest to his work. And this interest is heightened by the rapid change and development in his character.

There are, in fact, four pretty clearly defined periods in his life, although as always these overlap one another to a certain extent. First we see the youthful satirist lashing friend and foe with savage bitterness, as if his egregious egotism could find relief only in baying at the world. Then follows a second phase of revolt, taking pleasure in melodramatic isolation from society, exulting in moody revenge and unutterable mysteries, stalking before the world in gorgeous Oriental disguise. Out of this extravagance grows the Byron of the later *Childe Harold*, who would unburden his soul of its self-engendered torture in solitary communion with nature, and would find relief from the vulgar cant of the present in pensive reflection on the grandeurs of the older days. And last of all, when even these fail him, the self-mocking Don Juan, with his strange mingling of sweet and bitter, infinitely heavy-hearted at bottom, who cries out in the end: —

> 'Now . . . Imagination droops her pinion,
> And the sad truth that hovers o'er my desk
> Turns what was once romantic to burlesque.
>
> 'And if I laugh at any mortal thing,
>   'T is that I may not weep ; and if I weep,
> 'T is that our nature cannot always bring
>   Itself to apathy.'

He was saved, indeed, from the final silence of apathy by an early death. Yet it may at least be said that for one brief moment, — when, after escaping the vexations of his ruined domestic life, he wrote his *Epistle to Augusta* from the solitudes of Switzerland, — Byron caught, dim and distorted it may be, a glimpse of divine wisdom, which, if pursued, might have rendered him great among the wisest. But some Nemesis of fate, some error of will, swept him back into the bondage from which he never entirely escaped. As it was he wrung from the tragedy of his own life the irony and pathos of *Don Juan*, a poem which in its own sphere is so easily supreme that this achievement alone would rank him great among the strongest, if not among the wisest.

P. E. M.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

A ROMAUNT

[In reading *Childe Harold* one should remember that it is really two, or even three, poems written at quite different periods in Byron's poetical development. The first and second cantos represent the time of his early travels, when he was comparatively unskilled as a poet and unversed in the world. The stanzas begin with an awkward attempt to imitate the archaic language of Spenser, and there is an equally awkward confusion of the poet himself and his hero, who are neither wholly merged together nor yet fully distinguished. Nevertheless it is of these two cantos that Byron uttered the famous remark: 'I awoke one morning and found myself famous.' Canto I. was begun at Joannina in Albania, October 31, 1809, and Canto II. was finished at Smyrna, March 28, 1810. They were published in March, 1812. Between that date and the writing of the third canto came Byron's life in London, and the composition of the Oriental Tales; there came also his marriage and the fatal rupture. It was, indeed, during the first months of his melancholy exile that he returned to *Childe Harold*. Canto III. was completed at Diodati, on Lake Geneva, in July, 1816, and was published the same year. To compare these stanzas with those of the earlier cantos is to see how much Byron had grown in depth of feeling and in technical skill. The poem gains in force by the frankness with which the poet now speaks in his own person. With the first line, 'Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child,' we feel that we have come to the true Byron. The fourth canto, though published separately, is in the same tone as the third. It was written at Venice between June of 1817 and January of 1818, and was published immediately. As with most of his works the poem suffered manifold changes while going through the press, and later editions brought other alterations. The stanzas to 'Ianthe' (Lady Charlotte Harley) had been written in 1812, but were first printed in 1814 as a dedication to the seventh edition of Cantos I. and II.]

L'univers est une espèce de livre, dont on n'a lu que la première page quand on n'a vu que son pays. J'en ai feuilleté un assez grand nombre, que j'ai trouvé également mauvaises. Cet examen ne m'a point été infructueux. Je haïssais ma patrie. Toutes les impertinences des peuples divers, parmi lesquels j'ai vécu, m'ont réconcilié avec elle. Quand je n'aurais tiré d'autre bénéfice de mes voyages que celui-là, je n'en regretterais ni les frais ni les fatigues. — *Le Cosmopolite.*

PREFACE

[TO THE FIRST AND SECOND CANTOS]

The following poem was written, for the most part, amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe. It was begun in Albania; and the parts relative to Spain and Portugal were composed from the author's observations in those countries. Thus much it may be necessary to state for the correctness of the descriptions. The scenes attempted to be sketched are in Spain, Portugal, Epirus, Acarnania, and Greece. There, for the present, the poem stops: its reception will determine whether the author may venture to conduct his readers to the capital of the East, through Ionia and Phrygia: these two cantos are merely experimental.

A fictitious character is introduced for the sake of giving some connection to the piece; which, however, makes no pretension to regularity. It has been suggested to me by friends, on whose opinions I set a high value, that in this fictitious character, Childe Harold, I may incur the suspicion of having intended some real personage: this I beg leave, once for all, to disclaim — Harold is the child of imagination, for the purpose I have stated. In some very trivial particulars, and those merely local, there might be grounds for such a notion; but in the main points, I should hope, none whatever.

It is almost superfluous to mention that the appellation 'Childe,' as 'Childe Waters,' 'Childe Childers,' etc., is used as more consonant with the old structure of versification which I have adopted. The 'Good Night,' in the beginning of the first canto, was suggested by *Lord Maxwell's Good Night*, in the *Border Minstrelsy*, edited by Mr. Scott.

With the different poems which have been published on Spanish subjects, there may be found some slight coincidence in the first part, which treats of the Peninsula, but it can only be casual; as, with the exception of a few concluding stanzas, the whole of this poem was written in the Levant.

The stanza of Spenser, according to one of our most successful poets, admits of every variety. Dr. Beattie makes the following observation: 'Not long ago I began a poem in the style and stanza of Spenser, in which I propose to give full scope to my inclination, and be either droll or pathetic, descriptive or sentimental, tender or satirical, as the humour strikes me; for, if I mistake not, the measure which I have adopted admits equally of all these kinds of composition.' Strengthened in my opinion by such authority, and by the example of some in the highest order of Italian poets, I shall make no apology for attempts at similar variations in the following composition; satisfied that, if they are unsuccessful, their failure must be in the execution, rather than in the design sanctioned by the practice of Ariosto, Thomson, and Beattie.

LONDON, *February*, 1812.

ADDITION TO THE PREFACE

I have now waited till almost all our periodical journals have distributed their usual portion of criticism. To the justice of the generality of their criticisms I have nothing to object: it would ill become me to quarrel with their very slight degree of censure, when, perhaps, if they had been less kind they had been more candid. Returning, therefore, to all and each my best thanks for their liberality, on one point alone shall I venture an observation. Amongst the many objections justly urged to the very indifferent character of the 'vagrant Childe' (whom, notwithstanding many hints to the contrary, I still maintain to be a fictitious personage), it has been stated, that, besides the anachronism, he is very *unknightly*, as the times of the knights were times of love, honour, and so forth. Now, it so happens that the good old times, when 'l'amour du bon vieux tems, l'amour antique' flourished, were the most profligate of all possible centuries. Those who have any doubts on this subject may consult Sainte-Palaye, *passim*, and more particularly vol. ii. p. 69. The vows of chivalry were no better kept than any other vows whatsoever; and the songs of the Troubadours were not more decent, and certainly were much less refined, than those of Ovid. The 'cours d'amour, parlemens d'amour, ou de courtoisie et de gentillesse' had much more of love than of courtesy or gentleness. See Roland on the same subject with Sainte-Palaye. Whatever other objection may be urged to that most unamiable personage Childe Harold, he was so far perfectly knightly in his attributes — 'No waiter, but a knight templar.' By the by, I fear that Sir Tristrem and Sir Lancelot were no better than they should be, although very poetical personages and true knights 'sans peur,' though not 'sans reproche.' If the story of the institution of the 'Garter' be not a fable, the knights of that order have for several centuries borne the badge of a Countess of Salisbury, of indifferent memory. So much for chivalry. Burke need not have regretted that its days are over, though Marie-Antoinette was quite as chaste as most of those in whose honours lances were shivered, and knights unhorsed.

Before the days of Bayard, and down to those of Sir Joseph Banks (the most chaste and celebrated of ancient and modern times), few exceptions will be found to this statement; and I fear a little investigation will teach us not to regret these monstrous mummeries of the middle ages.

I now leave Childe Harold to live his day, such as he is; it had been more agreeable, and certainly more easy, to have drawn an amiable character. It had been easy to varnish over his faults, to make him do more and express less, but he never was intended as an example, further than to show that early perversion of mind and morals leads to satiety of past pleasures and disappointment in new ones, and that even the beauties of nature and the stimulus of travel (except ambition, the most powerful of all excitements) are lost on a soul so constituted, or rather misdirected. Had I proceeded with the poem, this character would have deepened as he drew to the close; for the outline which I once meant to fill up for him was, with some exceptions, the sketch of a modern Timon, perhaps a poetical Zeluco.

LONDON, 1813.

TO IANTHE

NOT in those climes where I have late been straying,
Though Beauty long hath there been matchless deem'd;
Not in those visions to the heart displaying
Forms which it sighs but to have only dream'd.

Hath aught like thee in truth or fancy seem'd.
Nor, having seen thee, shall I vainly seek
To paint those charms which varied as they beam'd:
To such as see thee not my words were weak;
To those who gaze on thee what language could they speak?

Ah! may'st thou ever be what now thou art,
Nor unbeseem the promise of thy spring,
As fair in form, as warm yet pure in heart,
Love's image upon earth without his wing,
And guileless beyond Hope's imagining!
And surely she who now so fondly rears
Thy youth, in thee, thus hourly brightening,
Beholds the rainbow of her future years,
Before whose heavenly hues all sorrow disappears.

Young Peri of the West! — 't is well for me
My years already doubly number thine;
My loveless eye unmoved may gaze on thee,
And safely view thy ripening beauties shine;
Happy, I ne'er shall see them in decline;
Happier, that while all younger hearts shall bleed,
Mine shall escape the doom thine eyes assign
To those whose admiration shall succeed,
But mix'd with pangs to Love's even loveliest hours decreed.

Oh! let that eye, which, wild as the Gazelle's,
Now brightly bold or beautifully shy,
Wins as it wanders, dazzles where it dwells,
Glance o'er this page, nor to my verse deny
That smile for which my breast might vainly sigh
Could I to thee be ever more than friend.
This much, dear maid, accord; nor question why
To one so young my strain I would commend,
But bid me with my wreath one matchless lily blend.

Such is thy name with this my verse entwined;
And long as kinder eyes a look shall cast
On Harold's page, Ianthe's here enshrined
Shall thus be first beheld, forgotten last:
My days once number'd, should this homage past
Attract thy fairy fingers near the lyre
Of him who hail'd thee, loveliest as thou wast,
Such is the most my memory may desire; —
Though more than Hope can claim, could Friendship less require?

CANTO THE FIRST

I

Oh, thou! in Hellas deem'd of heavenly birth,
Muse! form'd or fabled at the minstrel's will!
Since shamed full oft by later lyres on earth,
Mine dares not call thee from thy sacred hill:
Yet there I 've wander'd by thy vaunted rill;
Yes! sigh'd o'er Delphi's long-deserted shrine,
Where, save that feeble fountain, all is still;
Nor mote my shell awake the weary Nine
To grace so plain a tale, this lowly lay of mine.

II

Whilome in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth,
Who ne in virtue's ways did take delight;
But spent his days in riot most uncouth,
And vex'd with mirth the drowsy ear of Night.
Ah me! in sooth he was a shameless wight,
Sore given to revel and ungodly glee;

Few earthly things found favour in his sight
Save concubines and carnal companie,
And flaunting wassailers of high and low degree.

III

Childe Harold was he hight:—but whence his name
And lineage long, it suits me not to say;
Suffice it, that perchance they were of fame,
And had been glorious in another day:
But one sad losel soils a name for aye,
However mighty in the olden time;
Nor all that heralds rake from coffin'd clay,
Nor florid prose, nor honey'd lies of rhyme,
Can blazon evil deeds or consecrate a crime.

IV

Childe Harold basked him in the noontide sun,
Disporting there like any other fly,
Nor deem'd before his little day was done
One blast might chill him into misery.
But long ere scarce a third of his pass'd by,
Worse than adversity the Childe befell,—
He felt the fulness of satiety;
Then loathed he in his native land to dwell,
Which seem'd to him more lone than Eremite's sad cell.

V

For he through Sin's long labyrinth had run,
Nor made atonement when he did amiss;
Had sigh'd to many though he loved but one,
And that loved one, alas! could ne'er be his.
Ah, happy she! to 'scape from him whose kiss
Had been pollution unto aught so chaste;
Who soon had left her charms for vulgar bliss,
And spoil'd her goodly lands to gild his waste,
Nor calm domestic peace had ever deign'd to taste.

VI

And now Childe Harold was sore sick at heart,
And from his fellow bacchanals would flee;
'T is said, at times the sullen tear would start,
But Pride congeal'd the drop within his ee.
Apart he stalk'd in joyless reverie,
And from his native land resolved to go,
And visit scorching climes beyond the sea;
With pleasure drugg'd, he almost long'd for woe,
And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below.

VII

The Childe departed from his father's hall:
It was a vast and venerable pile;
So old, it seemèd only not to fall,
Yet strength was pillar'd in each massy aisle.
Monastic dome! condemn'd to uses vile!
Where Superstition once had made her den,
Now Paphian girls were known to sing and smile;
And monks might deem their time was come agen,
If ancient tales say true nor wrong these holy men.

VIII

Yet oft-times in his maddest mirthful mood
Strange pangs would flash along Childe Harold's brow,
As if the memory of some daily feud
Or disappointed passion lurk'd below:
But this none knew, nor haply cared to know;
For his was not that open, artless soul
That feels relief by bidding sorrow flow,
Nor sought he friend to counsel or condole,
Whate'er this grief mote be which he could not control.

IX

And none did love him; though to hall and bower
He gather'd revellers from far and near,

He knew them flatt'rers of the festal hour,
The heartless parasites of present cheer.
Yea ! none did love him — not his lemans dear —
But pomp and power alone are woman's care,
And where these are light Eros finds a feere;
Maidens, like moths, are ever caught by glare,
And Mammon wins his way where Seraphs might despair.

X

Childe Harold had a mother, not forgot
Though parting from that mother he did shun;
A sister whom he loved, but saw her not
Before his weary pilgrimage begun:
If friends he had, he bade adieu to none.
Yet deem not thence his breast a breast of steel:
Ye, who have known what 'tis to dote upon
A few dear objects, will in sadness feel
Such partings break the heart they fondly hope to heal.

XI

His house, his home, his heritage, his lands,
The laughing dames in whom he did delight,
Whose large blue eyes, fair locks, and snowy hands,
Might shake the saintship of an anchorite,
And long had fed his youthful appetite;
His goblets brimm'd with every costly wine,
And all that mote to luxury invite,
Without a sigh he left, to cross the brine
And traverse Paynim shores and pass Earth's central line.

XII

The sails were fill'd, and fair the light winds blew,
As glad to waft him from his native home;
And fast the white rocks faded from his view,
And soon were lost in circumambient foam.
And then, it may be, of his wish to roam
Repented he, but in his bosom slept
The silent thought, nor from his lips did come
One word of wail, whilst others sate and wept
And to the reckless gales unmanly moaning kept.

XIII

But when the sun was sinking in the sea
He seized his harp, which he at times could string
And strike, albeit with untaught melody,
When deem'd he no strange ear was listening.
And now his fingers o'er it he did fling,
And tuned his farewell in the dim twilight; —
While flew the vessel on her snowy wing,
And fleeting shores receded from his sight,
Thus to the elements he pour'd his last 'Good Night.'

1

'Adieu, adieu ! my native shore
Fades o'er the waters blue ;
The Night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
And shrieks the wild sea-mew.
Yon Sun that sets upon the sea
We follow in his flight ;
Farewell awhile to him and thee,
My native Land — Good Night !

2

'A few short hours and He will rise
To give the Morrow birth ;
And I shall hail the main and skies,
But not my mother Earth.
Deserted is my own good hall,
Its hearth is desolate ;
Wild weeds are gathering on the wall ;
My dog howls at the gate.

3

'Come hither, hither, my little page !
Why dost thou weep and wail ?
Or dost thou dread the billows' rage,
Or tremble at the gale ?
But dash the tear-drop from thine eye ;
Our ship is swift and strong,
Our fleetest falcon scarce can fly
More merrily along.' —

4

'Let winds be shrill, let waves roll high,
I fear not wave nor wind ;
Yet marvel not, Sir Childe, that I
Am sorrowful in mind :

For I have from my father gone,
A mother whom I love,
And have no friend, save these alone,
But thee — and one above.

5

'My father bless'd me fervently,
Yet did not much complain;
But sorely will my mother sigh
Till I come back again.' —
'Enough, enough, my little lad!
Such tears become thine eye;
If I thy guileless bosom had,
Mine own would not be dry. —

6

'Come hither, hither, my staunch yeoman,
Why dost thou look so pale?
Or dost thou dread a French foeman?
Or shiver at the gale?' —
'Deem'st thou I tremble for my life?
Sir Childe, I 'm not so weak;
But thinking on an absent wife
Will blanch a faithful cheek.

7

'My spouse and boys dwell near thy hall,
Along the bordering lake,
And when they on their father call,
What answer shall she make?' —
'Enough, enough, my yeoman good,
Thy grief let none gainsay;
But I, who am of lighter mood,
Will laugh to flee away.

8

'For who would trust the seeming sighs
Of wife or paramour?
Fresh feres will dry the bright blue eyes
We late saw streaming o'er.
For pleasures past I do not grieve,
Nor perils gathering near;
My greatest grief is that I leave
No thing that claims a tear.

9

'And now I 'm in the world alone,
Upon the wide, wide sea;
But why should I for others groan,
When none will sigh for me?
Perchance my dog will whine in vain,
Till fed by stranger hands;
But long ere I come back again
He 'd tear me where he stands.

10

'With thee, my bark, I 'll swiftly go
Athwart the foaming brine;
Nor care what land thou bear'st me to,
So not again to mine.
Welcome, welcome, ye dark blue waves!
And when you fail my sight,
Welcome, ye deserts, and ye caves!
My native land — Good Night!'

XIV

On, on the vessel flies, the land is gone,
And winds are rude in Biscay's sleepless bay.
Four days are sped, but with the fifth, anon,
New shores descried make every bosom gay;
And Cintra's mountain greets them on their way,
And Tagus dashing onward to the deep,
His fabled golden tribute bent to pay;
And soon on board the Lusian pilots leap,
And steer 'twixt fertile shores where yet few rustics reap.

XV

Oh, Christ! it is a goodly sight to see
What Heaven hath done for this delicious land,
What fruits of fragrance blush on every tree,
What goodly prospects o'er the hills expand!
But man would mar them with an impious hand!
And when the Almighty lifts his fiercest scourge
'Gainst those who most transgress his high command,
With treble vengeance will his hot shafts urge
Gaul's locust host, and earth from fellest foemen purge.

XVI

What beauties doth Lisboa first unfold!
Her image floating on that noble tide,
Which poets vainly pave with sands of gold,
But now whereon a thousand keels did ride
Of mighty strength, since Albion was allied
And to the Lusians did her aid afford, —
A nation swoln with ignorance and pride,
Who lick yet loathe the hand that waves the sword
To save them from the wrath of Gaul's unsparing lord.

XVII

But whoso entereth within this town,
That, sheening far, celestial seems to be,

Disconsolate will wander up and down
'Mid many things unsightly to strange ee:
For hut and palace show like filthily;
The dingy denizens are rear'd in dirt; 230
Ne personage of high or mean degree
Doth care for cleanness of surtout or shirt,
Though shent with Egypt's plague, unkempt, unwash'd, unhurt.

XVIII

Poor, paltry slaves! yet born 'midst noblest scenes —
Why, Nature, waste thy wonders on such men?
Lo! Cintra's glorious Eden intervenes
In variegated maze of mount and glen.
Ah me! what hand can pencil guide, or pen,
To follow half on which the eye dilates
Through views more dazzling unto mortal ken 240
Than those whereof such things the bard relates,
Who to the awe-struck world unlock'd Elysium's gates?

XIX

The horrid crags by toppling convent crown'd,
The cork-trees hoar that clothe the shaggy steep,
The mountain-moss by scorching skies imbrown'd,
The sunken glen whose sunless shrubs must weep,
The tender azure of the unruffled deep,
The orange tints that gild the greenest bough,
The torrents that from cliff to valley leap,
The vine on high, the willow branch below,
Mix'd in one mighty scene, with varied beauty glow. 251

XX

Then slowly climb the many-winding way,
And frequent turn to linger as you go,
From loftier rocks new loveliness survey,
And rest ye at 'Our Lady's house of woe;'
Where frugal monks their little relics show,
And sundry legends to the stranger tell:
Here impious men have punish'd been, and lo!
Deep in yon cave Honorius long did dwell,
In hope to merit Heaven by making earth a Hell. 260

XXI

And here and there, as up the crags you spring,
Mark many rude-carved crosses near the path;
Yet deem not these devotion's offering —
These are memorials frail of murderous wrath:
For wheresoe'er the shrieking victim hath
Pour'd forth his blood beneath the assassin's knife,
Some hand erects a cross of mouldering lath;
And grove and glen with thousand such are rife
Throughout this purple land where law secures not life.

XXII

On sloping mounds, or in the vale beneath,
Are domes where whilome kings did make repair; 271
But now the wild flowers round them only breathe;
Yet ruin'd splendour still is lingering there.
And yonder towers the Prince's palace fair:
There thou too, Vathek! England's wealthiest son,
Once form'd thy Paradise, as not aware
When wanton Wealth her mightiest deeds hath done,
Meek Peace voluptuous lures was ever wont to shun.

XXIII

Here didst thou dwell, here schemes of pleasure plan,
Beneath yon mountain's ever beauteous brow; 280
But now, as if a thing unblest by Man,
Thy fairy dwelling is as lone as thou!
Here giant weeds a passage scarce allow
To halls deserted, portals gaping wide —
Fresh lessons to the thinking bosom, how
Vain are the pleasaunces on earth supplied,
Swept into wrecks anon by Time's ungentle tide!

XXIV

Behold the hall where chiefs were late convened !
Oh, dome displeasing unto British eye !
With diadem hight foolscap, lo ! a fiend,
A little fiend that scoffs incessantly,
There sits in parchment robe array'd, and by
His side is hung a seal and sable scroll,
Where blazon'd glare names known to chivalry,
And sundry signatures adorn the roll,
Whereat the Urchin points, and laughs with all his soul.

XXV

Convention is the dwarfish demon styled
That foil'd the knights in Marialva's dome.
Of brains (if brains they had) he them beguiled,
And turn'd a nation's shallow joy to gloom.
Here Folly dash'd to earth the victor's plume,
And Policy regain'd what arms had lost:
For chiefs like ours in vain may laurels bloom !
Woe to the conqu'ring, not the conquer'd host,
Since baffled Triumph droops on Lusitania's coast !

XXVI

And ever since that martial synod met,
Britannia sickens, Cintra ! at thy name;
And folks in office at the mention fret,
And fain would blush, if blush they could, for shame.
How will posterity the deed proclaim !
Will not our own and fellow-nations sneer,
To view these champions cheated of their fame,
By foes in fight o'erthrown, yet victors here,
Where Scorn her finger points through many a coming year ?

XXVII

So deem'd the Childe, as o'er the mountains he
Did take his way in solitary guise.
Sweet was the scene, yet soon he thought to flee,
More restless than the swallow in the skies;
Though here awhile he learn'd to moralize,
For Meditation fix'd at times on him;
And conscious Reason whisper'd to despise
His early youth misspent in maddest whim;
But as he gazed on truth his aching eyes grew dim.

XXVIII

To horse ! to horse ! he quits, for ever quits
A scene of peace, though soothing to his soul;
Again he rouses from his moping fits,
But seeks not now the harlot and the bowl.
Onward he flies, nor fix'd as yet the goal
Where he shall rest him on his pilgrimage;
And o'er him many changing scenes must roll,
Ere toil his thirst for travel can assuage,
Or he shall calm his breast, or learn experience sage.

XXIX

Yet Mafra shall one moment claim delay,
Where dwelt of yore the Lusians' luckless queen;
And church and court did mingle their array,
And mass and revel were alternate seen, —
Lordlings and freres, ill-sorted fry I ween !
But here the Babylonian whore hath built
A dome, where flaunts she in such glorious sheen,
That men forget the blood which she hath spilt,
And bow the knee to Pomp that loves to varnish guilt.

XXX

O'er vales that teem with fruits, romantic hills
(Oh, that such hills upheld a freeborn race !),
Whereon to gaze the eye with joyaunce fills,

Childe Harold wends through many a pleasant place.
Though sluggards deem it but a foolish chase,
And marvel men should quit their easy chair,
The toilsome way, and long, long league to trace,
Oh! there is sweetness in the mountain air,
And life that bloated Ease can never hope to share.

XXXI

More bleak to view the hills at length recede,
And, less luxuriant, smoother vales extend;
Immense horizon-bounded plains succeed!
Far as the eye discerns, withouten end,
Spain's realms appear whereon her shepherds tend
Flocks whose rich fleece right well the trader knows —
Now must the pastor's arm his lambs defend,
For Spain is compass'd by unyielding foes,
And all must shield their all, or share Subjection's woes.

XXXII

Where Lusitania and her Sister meet,
Deem ye what bounds the rival realms divide?
Or ere the jealous Queens of Nations greet,
Doth Tayo interpose his mighty tide?
Or dark Sierras rise in craggy pride?
Or fence of art, like China's vasty wall? —
Ne barrier wall, ne river deep and wide,
Ne horrid crags, nor mountains dark and tall,
Rise like the rocks that part Hispania's land from Gaul:

XXXIII

But these between a silver streamlet glides,
And scarce a name distinguisheth the brook,
Though rival kingdoms press its verdant sides.
Here leans the idle shepherd on his crook,
And vacant on the rippling waves doth look,
That peaceful still 'twixt bitterest foemen flow;
For proud each peasant as the noblest duke:
Well doth the Spanish hind the difference know
'Twixt him and Lusian slave, the lowest of the low.

XXXIV

But ere the mingling bounds have far been pass'd,
Dark Guadiana rolls his power along
In sullen billows, murmuring and vast,
So noted ancient roundelays among.
Whilome upon his banks did legions throng
Of Moor and Knight, in mailèd splendour drest:
Here ceased the swift their race, here sunk the strong;
The Paynim turban and the Christian crest
Mix'd on the bleeding stream, by floating hosts oppress'd.

XXXV

Oh, lovely Spain! renown'd, romantic land!
Where is that standard which Pelagio bore,
When Cava's traitor-sire first call'd the band
That dyed thy mountain streams with gothic gore?
Where are those bloody banners which of yore
Waved o'er thy sons, victorious to the gale,
And drove at last the spoilers to their shore?
Red gleam'd the cross, and waned the crescent pale,
While Afric's echoes thrill'd with Moorish matrons' wail.

XXXVI

Teems not each ditty with the glorious tale?
Ah! such, alas, the hero's amplest fate!

When granite moulders and when records fail,
A peasant's plaint prolongs his dubious date.
Pride! bend thine eye from heaven to thine estate,
See how the Mighty shrink into a song!
Can Volume, Pillar, Pile, preserve thee great?
Or must thou trust Tradition's simple tongue,
When Flattery sleeps with thee and History does thee wrong?

XXXVII

Awake, ye sons of Spain! awake! advance!
Lo, Chivalry, your ancient goddess, cries;
But wields not, as of old, her thirsty lance,
Nor shakes her crimson plumage in the skies:
Now on the smoke of blazing bolts she flies,
And speaks in thunder through yon engine's roar!
In every peal she calls, 'Awake! arise!'
Say, is her voice more feeble than of yore,
When her war-song was heard on Andalusia's shore?

XXXVIII

Hark! heard you not those hoofs of dreadful note?
Sounds not the clang of conflict on the heath?
Saw ye not whom the reeking sabre smote;
Nor saved your brethren ere they sank beneath
Tyrants and Tyrants' slaves? — the fires of Death,
The bale-fires flash on high; from rock to rock
Each volley tells that thousands cease to breathe;
Death rides upon the sulphury Siroc,
Red Battle stamps his foot, and Nations feel the shock.

XXXIX

Lo! where the Giant on the mountain stands,
His blood-red tresses deep'ning in the sun,
With death-shot glowing in his fiery hands,
And eye that scorcheth all it glares upon, —
Restless it rolls, now fix'd, and now anon
Flashing afar, — and at his iron feet
Destruction cowers to mark what deeds are done;
For on this morn three potent Nations meet,
To shed before his Shrine the blood he deems most sweet.

XL

By Heaven! it is a splendid sight to see
(For one who hath no friend, no brother there)
Their rival scarfs of mix'd embroidery,
Their various arms that glitter in the air!
What gallant War-hounds rouse them from their lair,
And gnash their fangs, loud yelling for the prey!
All join the chase, but few the triumph share;
The Grave shall bear the chiefest prize away,
And Havoc scarce for joy can number their array.

XLI

Three hosts combine to offer sacrifice;
Three tongues prefer strange orisons on high;
Three gaudy standards flout the pale blue skies;
The shouts are France, Spain, Albion, Victory!
The foe, the victim, and the fond ally
That fights for all, but ever fights in vain,
Are met — as if at home they could not die —
To feed the crow, on Talavera's plain,
And fertilize the field that each pretends to gain.

XLII

There shall they rot, Ambition's honour'd fools!
Yes, Honour decks the turf that wraps their clay!
Vain Sophistry! in these behold the tools,

The broken tools, that tyrants cast away
By myriads, when they dare to pave their way
With human hearts — to what ? — a dream alone.
Can despots compass aught that hails their sway ?
Or call with truth one span of earth their own,
Save that wherein at last they crumble bone by bone ?

XLIII

Oh, Albuera, glorious field of grief!
As o'er thy plain the Pilgrim prick'd his steed,
Who could foresee thee, in a space so brief,
A scene where mingling foes should boast and bleed !
Peace to the perish'd ! may the warrior's meed
And tears of triumph their reward prolong !
Till others fall where other chieftains lead,
Thy name shall circle round the gaping throng,
And shine in worthless lays, the theme of transient song.

XLIV

Enough of Battle's minions ! let them play
Their game of lives, and barter breath for fame, —
Fame that will scarce re-animate their clay,
Though thousands fall to deck some single name.
In sooth 't were sad to thwart their noble aim
Who strike, blest hirelings ! for their country's good,
And die, that living might have proved her shame;
Perish'd, perchance, in some domestic feud,
Or in a narrower sphere wild Rapine's path pursued.

XLV

Full swiftly Harold wends his lonely way
Where proud Sevilla triumphs unsubdued;
Yet is she free — the spoiler's wished-for prey !
Soon, soon shall Conquest's fiery foot intrude,
Blackening her lovely domes with traces rude.
Inevitable hour ! 'Gainst fate to strive
Where Desolation plants her famish'd brood
Is vain, or Ilion, Tyre might yet survive,
And Virtue vanquish all, and Murder cease to thrive.

XLVI

But all unconscious of the coming doom,
The feast, the song, the revel here abounds;
Strange modes of merriment the hours consume,
Nor bleed these patriots with their country's wounds;
Nor here War's clarion, but Love's rebeck sounds;
Here Folly still his votaries inthralls;
And young-eyed Lewdness walks her midnight rounds:
Girt with the silent crimes of Capitals,
Still to the last kind Vice clings to the tott'ring walls.

XLVII

Not so the rustic; with his trembling mate
He lurks, nor casts his heavy eye afar,
Lest he should view his vineyard desolate,
Blasted below the dun hot breath of war.
No more beneath soft Eve's consenting star
Fandango twirls his jocund castanet:
Ah, monarchs ! could ye taste the mirth ye mar,
Not in the toils of Glory would ye fret;
The hoarse dull drum would sleep, and Man be happy yet !

XLVIII

How carols now the lusty muleteer ?
Of love, romance, devotion is his lay,
As whilome he was wont the leagues to cheer,
His quick bells wildly jingling on the way ?
No ! as he speeds, he chants 'Viva el Rey !'

And checks his song to execrate Godoy,
The royal wittol Charles, and curse the day
When first Spain's queen beheld the black-eyed boy,
And gore-faced Treason sprung from her adulterate joy.

XLIX

On yon long, level plain, at distance crown'd
With crags, whereon those Moorish turrets rest,
Wide-scatter'd hoof-marks dint the wounded ground;
And, scathed by fire, the greensward's darken'd vest
Tells that the foe was Andalusia's guest:
Here was the camp, the watch-flame, and the host,
Here the bold peasant storm'd the dragon's nest;
Still does he mark it with triumphant boast,
And points to yonder cliffs which oft were won and lost.

L

And whomsoe'er along the path you meet
Bears in his cap the badge of crimson hue,
Which tells you whom to shun and whom to greet.
Woe to the man that walks in public view
Without of loyalty this token true!
Sharp is the knife, and sudden is the stroke;
And sorely would the Gallic foeman rue,
If subtle poniards, wrapt beneath the cloke,
Could blunt the sabre's edge or clear the cannon's smoke.

LI

At every turn Morena's dusky height
Sustains aloft the battery's iron load;
And, far as mortal eye can compass sight,
The mountain-howitzer, the broken road,
The bristling palisade, the fosse o'erflow'd,
The station'd bands, the never-vacant watch,
The magazine in rocky durance stow'd,
The holster'd steed beneath the shed of thatch,
The ball-piled pyramid, the ever-blazing match,

LII

Portend the deeds to come:— but he whose nod
Has tumbled feebler despots from their sway,
A moment pauseth ere he lifts the rod;
A little moment deigneth to delay:
Soon will his legions sweep through these their way;
The West must own the Scourger of the world.
Ah Spain! how sad will be thy reckoning-day,
When soars Gaul's Vulture, with his wings unfurl'd,
And thou shalt view thy sons in crowds to Hades hurl'd.

LIII

And must they fall? the young, the proud, the brave,
To swell one bloated Chief's unwholesome reign?
No step between submission and a grave?
The rise of rapine and the fall of Spain?
And doth the Power that man adores ordain
Their doom, nor heed the suppliant's appeal?
Is all that desperate Valour acts in vain?
And Counsel sage, and patriotic Zeal,
The Veteran's skill, Youth's fire, and Manhood's heart of steel?

LIV

Is it for this the Spanish maid, aroused,
Hangs on the willow her unstrung guitar,
And, all unsex'd, the anlace hath espoused,
Sung the loud song, and dared the deed of war?
And she, whom once the semblance of a scar
Appall'd, an owlet's larum chill'd with dread,
Now views the column-scattering bay'net jar,
The falchion flash, and o'er the yet warm dead
Stalks with Minerva's step where Mars might quake to tread.

LV

Ye who shall marvel when you hear her tale,
Oh! had you known her in her softer hour,
Mark'd her black eye that mocks her coal-black veil,
Heard her light, lively tones in Lady's bower,
Seen her long locks that foil the painter's power,
Her fairy form, with more than female grace,
Scarce would you deem that Saragoza's tower
Beheld her smile in Danger's Gorgon face,
Thin the closed ranks, and lead in Glory's fearful chase.

LVI

Her lover sinks — she sheds no ill-timed tear;
Her chief is slain — she fills his fatal post;
Her fellows flee — she checks their base career;
The foe retires — she heads the sallying host.
Who can appease like her a lover's ghost?
Who can avenge so well a leader's fall?
What maid retrieve when man's flush'd hope is lost?
Who hang so fiercely on the flying Gaul,
Foil'd by a woman's hand, before a batter'd wall?

LVII

Yet are Spain's maids no race of Amazons,
But form'd for all the witching arts of love.
Though thus in arms they emulate her sons,
And in the horrid phalanx dare to move,
'T is but the tender fierceness of the dove,
Pecking the hand that hovers o'er her mate:
In softness as in firmness far above
Remoter females, famed for sickening prate;
Her mind is nobler sure, her charms perchance as great.

LVIII

The seal Love's dimpling finger hath impress'd
Denotes how soft that chin which bears his touch;
Her lips, whose kisses pout to leave their nest,
Bid man be valiant ere he merit such:
Her glance how wildly beautiful! how much
Hath Phœbus woo'd in vain to spoil her cheek,
Which glows yet smoother from his amorous clutch!
Who round the North for paler dames would seek?
How poor their forms appear! how languid, wan, and weak!

LIX

Match me, ye climes which poets love to laud;
Match me, ye harams of the land where now
I strike my strain, far distant, to applaud
Beauties that ev'n a cynic must avow —
Match me those Houries, whom ye scarce allow
To taste the gale lest Love should ride the wind,
With Spain's dark-glancing daughters — deign to know,
There your wise Prophet's paradise we find,
His black-eyed maids of Heaven, angelically kind.

LX

Oh, thou Parnassus whom I now survey!
Not in the phrensy of a dreamer's eye,
Not in the fabled landscape of a lay,
But soaring snow-clad through thy native sky,
In the wild pomp of mountain majesty!
What marvel if I thus essay to sing?
The humblest of thy pilgrims passing by
Would gladly woo thine Echoes with his string,
Though from thy heights no more one Muse will wave her wing.

LXI

Oft have I dream'd of Thee, whose glorious name
Who knows not, knows not man's divinest lore;

And now I view thee, 't is, alas! with shame
That I in feeblest accents must adore.
When I recount thy worshippers of yore
I tremble, and can only bend the knee;
Nor raise my voice, nor vainly dare to soar,
But gaze beneath thy cloudy canopy
In silent joy to think at last I look on Thee!

LXII

Happier in this than mightiest bards have been,
Whose fate to distant homes confined their lot,
Shall I unmoved behold the hallow'd scene,
Which others rave of though they know it not?
Though here no more Apollo haunts his grot,
And thou, the Muses' seat, art now their grave,
Some gentle spirit still pervades the spot,
Sighs in the gale, keeps silence in the cave,
And glides with glassy foot o'er yon melodious wave.

LXIII

Of thee hereafter. — Ev'n amidst my strain
I turn'd aside to pay my homage here;
Forgot the land, the sons, the maids of Spain,
Her fate, to every freeborn bosom dear;
And hail'd thee, not perchance without a tear.
Now to my theme — but from thy holy haunt
Let me some remnant, some memorial bear;
Yield me one leaf of Daphne's deathless plant,
Nor let thy votary's hope be deem'd an idle vaunt.

LXIV

But ne'er didst thou, fair Mount, when Greece was young,
See round thy giant base a brighter choir;
Nor e'er did Delphi, when her priestess sung
The Pythian hymn with more than mortal fire,
Behold a train more fitting to inspire
The song of love than Andalusia's maids,
Nurst in the glowing lap of soft desire:
Ah! that to these were given such peaceful shades
As Greece can still bestow, though Glory fly her glades.

LXV

Fair is proud Seville; let her country boast
Her strength, her wealth, her site of ancient days;
But Cadiz, rising on the distant coast,
Calls forth a sweeter though ignoble praise.
Ah, Vice, how soft are thy voluptuous ways!
While boyish blood is mantling, who can 'scape
The fascination of thy magic gaze?
A Cherub-hydra round us dost thou gape,
And mould to every taste thy dear delusive shape.

LXVI

When Paphos fell by time — accursèd Time!
The Queen who conquers all must yield to thee —
The Pleasures fled, but sought as warm a clime;
And Venus, constant to her native sea,
To nought else constant, hither deign'd to flee;
And fix'd her shrine within these walls of white;
Though not to one dome circumscribeth she
Her worship, but, devoted to her rite,
A thousand altars rise, for ever blazing bright.

LXVII

From morn till night, from night till startled Morn
Peeps blushing on the revel's laughing crew,
The song is heard, the rosy garland worn;
Devices quaint and frolics ever new
Tread on each other's kibes. A long adieu
He bids to sober joy that here sojourns:
Nought interrupts the riot, though in lieu
Of true devotion monkish incense burns,
And love and prayer unite, or rule the hour by turns.

LXVIII

The Sabbath comes, a day of blessed rest;
What hallows it upon this Christian shore?
Lo! it is sacred to a solemn feast;
Hark! heard you not the forest-monarch's roar?
Crashing the lance, he snuffs the spouting gore
Of man and steed, o'erthrown beneath his horn;
The throng'd arena shakes with shouts for more;
Yells the mad crowd o'er entrails freshly torn,
Nor shrinks the female eye, nor ev'n affects to mourn.

LXIX

The seventh day this, the jubilee of man.
London, right well thou know'st the day of prayer:
Then thy spruce citizen, wash'd artisan,
And smug apprentice gulp their weekly air;
Thy coach of hackney, whiskey, one-horse chair,
And humblest gig through sundry suburbs whirl;
To Hampstead, Brentford, Harrow make repair;
Till the tired jade the wheel forgets to hurl,
Provoking envious gibe from each pedestrian churl.

LXX

Some o'er thy Thamis row the ribbon'd fair,
Others along the safer turnpike fly;
Some Richmond-hill ascend, some scud to Ware,
And many to the steep of Highgate hie.
Ask ye, Bœotian shades, the reason why?
'T is to the worship of the solemn Horn,
Grasp'd in the holy hand of Mystery,
In whose dread name both men and maids are sworn,
And consecrate the oath with draught, and dance till morn.

LXXI

All have their fooleries; not alike are thine,
Fair Cadiz, rising o'er the dark blue sea!
Soon as the matin bell proclaimeth nine,
Thy saint adorers count the rosary.
Much is the Virgin teased to shrive them free
(Well do I ween the only virgin there)
From crimes as numerous as her beadsmen be;
Then to the crowded circus forth they fare;
Young, old, high, low, at once the same diversion share.

LXXII

The lists are oped, the spacious area clear'd,
Thousands on thousands piled are seated round;
Long ere the first loud trumpet's note is heard,
Ne vacant space for lated wight is found.
Here dons, grandees, but chiefly dames abound,
Skill'd in the ogle of a roguish eye,
Yet ever well inclined to heal the wound;
None through their cold disdain are doom'd to die,
As moon-struck bards complain, by Love's sad archery.

LXXIII

Hush'd is the din of tongues; on gallant steeds,
With milk-white crest, gold spur, and light poised lance,
Four cavaliers prepare for venturous deeds,
And lowly bending to the lists advance;
Rich are their scarfs, their chargers featly prance:
If in the dangerous game they shine to-day,
The crowd's loud shout and ladies' lovely glance,
Best prize of better acts, they bear away,
And all that kings or chiefs e'er gain their toils repay.

LXXIV

In costly sheen and gaudy cloak array'd,
But all afoot, the light-limb'd Matadore
Stands in the centre, eager to invade
The lord of lowing herds; but not before
The ground with cautious tread is traversed o'er,
Lest aught unseen should lurk to thwart his speed:

His arms a dart, he fights aloof, nor more
Can man achieve without the friendly steed —
Alas ! too oft condemn'd for him to bear and bleed.

LXXV

Thrice sounds the clarion; lo ! the signal falls,
The den expands, and Expectation mute
Gapes round the silent circle's peopled walls.
Bounds with one lashing spring the mighty brute,
And, wildly staring, spurns with sounding foot
The sand, nor blindly rushes on his foe:
Here, there, he points his threatening front, to suit
His first attack, wide waving to and fro
His angry tail; red rolls his eye's dilated glow.

LXXVI

Sudden he stops; his eye is fix'd: away,
Away, thou heedless boy ! prepare the spear:
Now is thy time, to perish, or display
The skill that yet may check his mad career.
With well-timed croupe the nimble coursers veer;
On foams the bull, but not unscathed he goes;
Streams from his flank the crimson torrent clear:
He flies, he wheels, distracted with his throes;
Dart follows dart; lance, lance; loud bellowings speak his woes.

LXXVII

Again he comes; nor dart nor lance avail,
Nor the wild plunging of the tortured horse;
Though man and man's avenging arms assail,
Vain are his weapons, vainer is his force.
One gallant steed is stretch'd a mangled corse;
Another, hideous sight ! unseam'd appears,
His gory chest unveils life's panting source;
Though death-struck, still his feeble frame he rears;
Staggering, but stemming all, his lord unharm'd he bears.

LXXVIII

Foil'd, bleeding, breathless, furious to the last,
Full in the centre stands the bull at bay,
Mid wounds, and clinging darts, and lances brast,
And foes disabled in the brutal fray:
And now the Matadores around him play,
Shake the red cloak, and poise the ready brand:
Once more through all he bursts his thundering way —
Vain rage ! the mantle quits the conynge hand,
Wraps his fierce eye — 'tis past — he sinks upon the sand !

LXXIX

Where his vast neck just mingles with the spine,
Sheathed in his form the deadly weapon lies.
He stops, he starts, disdaining to decline;
Slowly he falls amidst triumphant cries,
Without a groan, without a struggle dies.
The decorated car appears, on high
The corse is piled — sweet sight for vulgar eyes;
Four steeds that spurn the rein, as swift as shy,
Hurl the dark bulk along, scarce seen in dashing by.

LXXX

Such the ungentle sport that oft invites
The Spanish maid, and cheers the Spanish swain;
Nurtured in blood betimes, his heart delights
In vengeance, gloating on another's pain.
What private feuds the troubled village stain !
Though now one phalanx'd host should meet the foe,
Enough, alas, in humble homes remain
To meditate 'gainst friends the secret blow,
For some slight cause of wrath, whence life's warm stream must flow.

LXXXI

But Jealousy has fled: his bars, his bolts,
His wither'd centinel, Duenna sage!
And all whereat the generous soul revolts,
Which the stern dotard deem'd he could encage,
Have pass'd to darkness with the vanish'd age.
Who late so free as Spanish girls were seen
(Ere War uprose in his volcanic rage),
With braided tresses bounding o'er the green,
While on the gay dance shone Night's lover-loving Queen?

LXXXII

Oh! many a time and oft had Harold loved,
Or dream'd he loved, since Rapture is a dream;
But now his wayward bosom was unmoved,
For not yet had he drunk of Lethe's stream;
And lately had he learn'd with truth to deem
Love has no gift so grateful as his wings:
How fair, how young, how soft soe'er he seem
Full from the fount of Joy's delicious springs
Some bitter o'er the flowers its bubbling venom flings.

LXXXIII

Yet to the beauteous form he was not blind,
Though now it moved him as it moves the wise:
Not that Philosophy on such a mind
E'er deign'd to bend her chastely-awful eyes:
But Passion raves itself to rest, or flies;
And Vice, that digs her own voluptuous tomb,
Had buried long his hopes, no more to rise:
Pleasure's pall'd victim! life-abhorring gloom
Wrote on his faded brow curst Cain's unresting doom

LXXXIV

Still he beheld, nor mingled with the throng;
But view'd them not with misanthropic hate:
Fain would he now have join'd the dance, the song;
But who may smile that sinks beneath his fate?
Nought that he saw his sadness could abate:
Yet once he struggled 'gainst the demon's sway,
And as in Beauty's bower he pensive sate,
Pour'd forth this unpremeditated lay,
To charms as fair as those that soothed his happier day.

TO INEZ

1

Nay, smile not at my sullen brow;
  Alas! I cannot smile again:
Yet Heaven avert that ever thou
  Shouldst weep, and haply weep in vain.

2

And dost thou ask what secret woe
  I bear, corroding joy and youth?
And wilt thou vainly seek to know
  A pang, ev'n thou must fail to soothe?

3

It is not love, it is not hate,
  Nor low Ambition's honours lost,
That bids me loathe my present state,
  And fly from all I prized the most:

4

It is that weariness which springs
  From all I meet, or hear, or see;
To me no pleasure Beauty brings,
  Thine eyes have scarce a charm for me.

5

It is that settled, ceaseless gloom
  The fabled Hebrew wanderer bore;
That will not look beyond the tomb,
  But cannot hope for rest before.

6

What Exile from himself can flee?
  To zones, though more and more remote,
Still, still pursues, where-e'er I be,
  The blight of life — the demon Thought.

7

Yet others rapt in pleasure seem,
  And taste of all that I forsake:

Oh, may they still of transport dream,
And ne'er, at least like me, awake!

8

Through many a clime 't is mine to go,
With many a retrospection curst;
And all my solace is to know,
Whate'er betides, I 've known the worst.

9

What is that worst? Nay do not ask —
In pity from the search forbear:
Smile on, nor venture to unmask
Man's heart, and view the Hell that's there.

LXXXV

Adieu, fair Cadiz! yea, a long adieu!
Who may forget how well thy walls have stood?
When all were changing thou alone wert true,
First to be free and last to be subdued.
And if amidst a scene, a shock so rude,
Some native blood was seen thy streets to dye,
A traitor only fell beneath the feud:
Here all were noble, save Nobility;
None hugg'd a conqueror's chain, save fallen Chivalry!

LXXXVI

Such be the sons of Spain, and strange her fate!
They fight for freedom who were never free,
A Kingless people for a nerveless state;
Her vassals combat when their chieftains flee,
True to the veriest slaves of Treachery;
Fond of a land which gave them nought but life,
Pride points the path that leads to Liberty;
Back to the struggle, baffled in the strife,
War, war is still the cry, 'War even to the knife!'

LXXXVII

Ye who would more of Spain and Spaniards know,
Go, read whate'er is writ of bloodiest strife;
Whate'er keen Vengeance urged on foreign foe
Can act, is acting there against man's life:
From flashing scimitar to secret knife,
War mouldeth there each weapon to his need —
So may he guard the sister and the wife,
So may he make each curst oppressor bleed,
So may such foes deserve the most remorseless deed!

LXXXVIII

Flows there a tear of pity for the dead?
Look o'er the ravage of the reeking plain;
Look on the hands with female slaughter red;
Then to the dogs resign the unburied slain,
Then to the vulture let each corse remain;
Albeit unworthy of the prey-bird's maw,
Let their bleach'd bones and blood's unbleaching stain
Long mark the battle-field with hideous awe:
Thus only may our sons conceive the scenes we saw!

LXXXIX

Nor yet, alas, the dreadful work is done;
Fresh legions pour adown the Pyrenees;
It deepens still, the work is scarce begun,
Nor mortal eye the distant end foresees.
Fall'n nations gaze on Spain; if freed, she frees
More than her fell Pizarros once enchain'd:
Strange retribution! now Columbia's ease
Repairs the wrongs that Quito's sons sustain'd,
While o'er the parent clime prowls Murder unrestrain'd.

XC

Not all the blood at Talavera shed,
Not all the marvels of Barossa's fight,
Not Albuera lavish of the dead,
Have won for Spain her well-asserted right.
When shall her Olive-Branch be free from blight?
When shall she breathe her from the blushing toil?
How many a doubtful day shall sink in night,

Ere the Frank robber turn him from his spoil,
And Freedom's stranger-tree grow native of the soil!

XCI

And thou, my friend since unavailing woe
Bursts from my heart and mingles with the strain —
Had the sword laid thee with the mighty low,
Pride might forbid e'en Friendship to complain;
But thus unlaurel'd to descend in vain,
By all forgotten, save the lonely breast,
And mix unbleeding with the boasted slain,
While Glory crowns so many a meaner crest!
What hadst thou done to sink so peacefully to rest?

XCII

Oh, known the earliest, and esteem'd the most!
Dear to a heart where nought was left so dear!
Though to my hopeless days forever lost,
In dreams deny me not to see thee here!
And Morn in secret shall renew the tear
Of Consciousness awaking to her woes,
And Fancy hover o'er thy bloodless bier,
Till my frail frame return to whence it rose,
And mourn'd and mourner lie united in repose.

XCIII

Here is one fytte of Harold's pilgrimage:
Ye who of him may further seek to know,
Shall find some tidings in a future page,
If he that rhymeth now may scribble moe.
Is this too much? stern Critic, say not so:
Patience! and ye shall hear what he beheld
In other lands, where he was doom'd to go:
Lands that contain the monuments of Eld,
Ere Greece and Grecian arts by barbarous hands were quell'd.

CANTO THE SECOND

I

Come, blue-eyed maid of heaven! — but thou, alas,
Didst never yet one mortal song inspire —
Goddess of Wisdom! here thy temple was,
And is, despite of war and wasting fire,
And years, that bade thy worship to expire:
But worse than steel, and flame, and ages slow,
Is the dread sceptre and dominion dire
Of men who never felt the sacred glow
That thoughts of thee and thine on polish'd breasts bestow.

II

Ancient of days! august Athena! where,
Where are thy men of might? thy grand in soul?
Gone — glimmering through the dream of things that were:
First in the race that led to Glory's goal,
They won, and pass'd away — is this the whole?
A schoolboy's tale, the wonder of an hour!
The warrior's weapon and the sophist's stole
Are sought in vain, and o'er each mouldering tower,
Dim with the mist of years, gray flits the shade of power.

III

Son of the morning, rise! approach you here!
Come — but molest not yon defenceless urn:
Look on this spot — a nation's sepulchre!
Abode of gods, whose shrines no longer burn.
Even gods must yield, religions take their turn;
'T was Jove's, 't is Mahomet's, and other creeds
Will rise with other years, till man shall learn

Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds, —
Poor child of Doubt and Death, whose hope is built on reeds.

IV

Bound to the earth, he lifts his eye to heaven —
Is 't not enough, unhappy thing, to know
Thou art? Is this a boon so kindly given,
That, being, thou wouldst be again, and go,
Thou know'st not, reck'st not to what region, so
On earth no more, but mingled with the skies?
Still wilt thou dream on future joy and woe?
Regard and weigh yon dust before it flies,
That little urn saith more than thousand homilies.

V

Or burst the vanish'd Hero's lofty mound;
Far on the solitary shore he sleeps:
He fell, and falling nations mourn'd around;
But now not one of saddening thousands weeps,
Nor warlike worshipper his vigil keeps
Where demi-gods appear'd, as records tell.
Remove yon skull from out the scatter'd heaps:
Is that a temple where a God may dwell?
Why ev'n the worm at last disdains her shatter'd cell!

VI

Look on its broken arch, its ruin'd wall,
Its chambers desolate, and portals foul:
Yes, this was once Ambition's airy hall,
The dome of Thought, the palace of the Soul.
Behold through each lack-lustre, eyeless hole,
The gay recess of Wisdom and of Wit
And Passion's host, that never brook'd control:
Can all saint, sage, or sophist ever writ,
People this lonely tower, this tenement refit?

VII

Well didst thou speak, Athena's wisest son!
'All that we know is, nothing can be known.'
Why should we shrink from what we cannot shun?
Each hath his pang, but feeble sufferers groan
With brain-born dreams of evil all their own.
Pursue what Chance or Fate proclaimeth best;
Peace waits us on the shores of Acheron:
There no forced banquet claims the sated guest,
But Silence spreads the couch of ever welcome rest.

VIII

Yet if, as holiest men have deem'd, there be
A land of souls beyond that sable shore,
To shame the doctrine of the Sadducee
And sophists, madly vain of dubious lore;
How sweet it were in concert to adore
With those who made our mortal labours light!
To hear each voice we fear'd to hear no more!
Behold each mighty shade reveal'd to sight,
The Bactrian, Samian sage, and all who taught the right!

IX

There, thou! — whose love and life, together fled,
Have left me here to love and live in vain —
Twined with my heart, and can I deem thee dead,
When busy Memory flashes on my brain?
Well — I will dream that we may meet again,
And woo the vision to my vacant breast:
If aught of young Remembrance then remain,
Be as it may Futurity's behest,
For me 't were bliss enough to know thy spirit blest!

X

Here let me sit upon this massy stone,
The marble column's yet unshaken base;

Here, son of Saturn, was thy fav'rite throne,
Mightiest of many such! Hence let me trace
The latent grandeur of thy dwelling-place.
It may not be: nor ev'n can Fancy's eye
Restore what Time hath labour'd to deface.
Yet these proud pillars claim no passing sigh;
Unmoved the Moslem sits, the light Greek carols by.

XI

But who, of all the plunderers of yon fane
On high, where Pallas linger'd, loath to flee
The latest relic of her ancient reign, —
The last, the worst, dull spoiler, who was he?
Blush, Caledonia, such thy son could be!
England, I joy no child he was of thine:
Thy free-born men should spare what once was free;
Yet they could violate each saddening shrine,
And bear these altars o'er the long-reluctant brine.

XII

But most the modern Pict's ignoble boast,
To rive what Goth, and Turk, and Time hath spared:
Cold as the crags upon his native coast,
His mind as barren and his heart as hard,
Is he whose head conceived, whose hand prepared,
Aught to displace Athena's poor remains:
Her sons too weak the sacred shrine to guard,
Yet felt some portion of their mother's pains,
And never knew, till then, the weight of Despots' chains.

XIII

What! shall it e'er be said by British tongue,
Albion was happy in Athena's tears?
Though in thy name the slaves her bosom wrung,
Tell not the deed to blushing Europe's ears;
The ocean queen, the free Britannia, bears
The last poor plunder from a bleeding land:
Yes, she, whose gen'rous aid her name endears,
Tore down those remnants with a harpy's hand,
Which envious Eld forbore, and tyrants left to stand.

XIV

Where was thine Ægis, Pallas, that appall'd
Stern Alaric and Havoc on their way?
Where Peleus' son? whom Hell in vain enthrall'd,
His shade from Hades upon that dread day
Bursting to light in terrible array!
What! could not Pluto spare the chief once more,
To scare a second robber from his prey?
Idly he wander'd on the Stygian shore,
Nor now preserved the walls he loved to shield before.

XV

Cold is the heart, fair Greece, that looks on thee,
Nor feels as lovers o'er the dust they loved;
Dull is the eye that will not weep to see
Thy walls defaced, thy mouldering shrines removed
By British hands, which it had best behoved
To guard those relics ne'er to be restored.
Curst be the hour when from their isle they roved,
And once again thy hapless bosom gored,
And snatch'd thy shrinking Gods to northern climes abhorr'd!

XVI

But where is Harold? shall I then forget
To urge the gloomy wanderer o'er the wave?
Little reck'd he of all that men regret;
No loved-one now in feign'd lament could rave;
No friend the parting hand extended gave,
Ere the cold stranger pass'd to other climes:

Hard is his heart whom charms may not enslave;
But Harold felt not as in other times,
And left without a sigh the land of war and crimes.

XVII

He that has sail'd upon the dark blue sea
Has view'd at times, I ween, a full fair sight;
When the fresh breeze is fair as breeze may be,
The white sail set, the gallant frigate tight;
Masts, spires, and strand retiring to the right,
The glorious main expanding o'er the bow,
The convoy spread like wild swans in their flight,
The dullest sailer wearing bravely now,
So gaily curl the waves before each dashing prow.

XVIII

And oh, the little warlike world within!
The well-reeved guns, the netted canopy,
The hoarse command, the busy humming din,
When, at a word, the tops are mann'd on high:
Hark, to the Boatswain's call, the cheering cry!
While through the seaman's hand the tackle glides;
Or schoolboy Midshipman that, standing by,
Strains his shrill pipe as good or ill betides,
And well the docile crew that skilful urchin guides.

XIX

White is the glassy deck, without a stain,
Where on the watch the staid Lieutenant walks:
Look on that part which sacred doth remain
For the lone chieftain, who majestic stalks,
Silent and fear'd by all — not oft he talks
With aught beneath him, if he would preserve
That strict restraint, which, broken, ever balks
Conquest and Fame: but Britons rarely swerve
From law, however stern, which tends their strength to nerve.

XX

Blow! swiftly blow, thou keel-compelling gale!
Till the broad sun withdraws his lessening ray;
Then must the pennant-bearer slacken sail,
That lagging barks may make their lazy way.
Ah, grievance sore and listless dull delay,
To waste on sluggish hulks the sweetest breeze!
What leagues are lost before the dawn of day,
Thus loitering pensive on the willing seas,
The flapping sail haul'd down to halt for logs like these!

XXI

The moon is up; by Heaven, a lovely eve!
Long streams of light o'er dancing waves expand;
Now lads on shore may sigh, and maids believe —
Such be our fate when we return to land!
Meantime some rude Arion's restless hand
Wakes the brisk harmony that sailors love;
A circle there of merry listeners stand,
Or to some well-known measure featly move,
Thoughtless, as if on shore they still were free to rove.

XXII

Through Calpe's straits survey the steepy shore;
Europe and Afric on each other gaze,
Lands of the dark-eyed Maid and dusky Moor
Alike beheld beneath pale Hecate's blaze:
How softly on the Spanish shore she plays,
Disclosing rock and slope and forest brown,
Distinct, though darkening with her waning phase;

But Mauritania's giant-shadows frown,
From mountain-cliff to coast descending sombre down.

XXIII

'T is night, when Meditation bids us feel
We once have loved, though love is at an end;
The heart, lone mourner of its baffled zeal,
Though friendless now, will dream it had a friend.
Who with the weight of years would wish to bend,
When Youth itself survives young Love and Joy?
Alas, when mingling souls forget to blend,
Death hath but little left him to destroy!
Ah, happy years! once more who would not be a boy?

XXIV

Thus bending o'er the vessel's laving side,
To gaze on Dian's wave-reflected sphere,
The soul forgets her schemes of Hope and Pride,
And flies unconscious o'er each backward year.
None are so desolate but something dear,
Dearer than self, possesses or possess'd
A thought, and claims the homage of a tear;
A flashing pang! of which the weary breast
Would still, albeit in vain, the heavy heart divest.

XXV

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean;
This is not solitude, 't is but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms and view her stores unroll'd.

XXVI

But 'midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men,
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,
And roam along, the world's tired denizen,
With none who bless us, none whom we can bless;
Minions of splendour shrinking from distress!
None that, with kindred consciousness endued,
If we were not would seem to smile the less,
Of all that flatter'd, follow'd, sought, and sued;
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!

XXVII

More blest the life of godly eremite,
Such as on lonely Athos may be seen,
Watching at eve upon the giant height,
Which looks o'er waves so blue, skies so serene,
That he who there at such an hour hath been
Will wistful linger on that hallow'd spot;
Then slowly tear him from the witching scene,
Sigh forth one wish that such had been his lot,
Then turn to hate a world he had almost forgot.

XXVIII

Pass we the long, unvarying course, the track
Oft trod, that never leaves a trace behind;
Pass we the calm, the gale, the change, the tack,
And each well known caprice of wave and wind;
Pass we the joys and sorrows sailors find,
Coop'd in their wingèd sea-girt citadel;
The foul, the fair, the contrary, the kind,
As breezes rise and fall and billows swell,
Till on some jocund morn — lo, land! and all is well.

XXIX

But not in silence pass Calypso's isles,
The sister tenants of the middle deep;
There for the weary still a haven smiles,
Though the fair goddess long hath ceased to weep

And o'er her cliffs a fruitless watch to keep
For him who dared prefer a mortal bride:
Here, too, his boy essay'd the dreadful leap
Stern Mentor urged from high to yonder tide;
While thus of both bereft, the nymph-queen doubly sigh'd.

XXX

Her reign is past, her gentle glories gone:
But trust not this; too easy youth, beware!
A mortal sovereign holds her dangerous throne,
And thou may'st find a new Calypso there.
Sweet Florence, could another ever share
This wayward, loveless heart, it would be thine:
But, check'd by every tie, I may not dare
To cast a worthless offering at thy shrine,
Nor ask so dear a breast to feel one pang for mine.

XXXI

Thus Harold deem'd, as on that lady's eye
He look'd and met its beam without a thought,
Save Admiration glancing harmless by:
Love kept aloof, albeit not far remote,
Who knew his votary often lost and caught,
But knew him as his worshipper no more;
And ne'er again the boy his bosom sought:
Since now he vainly urged him to adore,
Well deem'd the little God his ancient sway was o'er.

XXXII

Fair Florence found, in sooth with some amaze,
One who, 't was said, still sigh'd to all he saw,
Withstand, unmoved, the lustre of her gaze,
Which others hail'd with real or mimic awe,
Their hope, their doom, their punishment, their law,
All that gay Beauty from her bondsmen claims:
And much she marvell'd that a youth so raw
Nor felt, nor feign'd at least, the oft-told flames,
Which, though sometimes they frown, yet rarely anger dames.

XXXIII

Little knew she that seeming marble heart,
Now mask'd in silence or withheld by pride,
Was not unskilful in the spoiler's art,
And spread its snares licentious far and wide;
Nor from the base pursuit had turn'd aside,
As long as aught was worthy to pursue:
But Harold on such arts no more relied;
And had he doted on those eyes so blue,
Yet never would he join the lovers' whining crew.

XXXIV

Not much he kens, I ween, of woman's breast,
Who thinks that wanton thing is won by sighs;
What careth she for hearts when once possess'd?
Do proper homage to thine idol's eyes,
But not too humbly or she will despise
Thee and thy suit, though told in moving tropes:
Disguise ev'n tenderness if thou art wise;
Brisk Confidence still best with woman copes;
Pique her and soothe in turn, soon Passion crowns thy hopes.

XXXV

'T is an old lesson; Time approves it true,
And those who know it best, deplore it most;
When all is won that all desire to woo,
The paltry prize is hardly worth the cost:
Youth wasted, minds degraded, honour lost,
These are thy fruits, successful Passion, these!
If, kindly cruel, early Hope is crost,
Still to the last it rankles, a disease,
Not to be cured when Love itself forgets to please.

XXXVI

Away! nor let me loiter in my song,
For we have many a mountain-path to tread,
And many a varied shore to sail along,
By pensive Sadness, not by Fiction, led,—
Climes, fair withal as ever mortal head
Imagined in its little schemes of thought;
Or e’er in new Utopias were ared,
To teach man what he might be, or he ought;
If that corrupted thing could ever such be taught.

XXXVII

Dear Nature is the kindest mother still,
Though alway changing, in her aspect mild;
From her bare bosom let me take my fill,
Her never-wean’d, though not her favour’d child.
Oh, she is fairest in her features wild,
Where nothing polish’d dares pollute her path!
To me by day or night she ever smiled,
Though I have mark’d her when none other hath,
And sought her more and more, and loved her best in wrath.

XXXVIII

Land of Albania, where Iskander rose,
Theme of the young, and beacon of the wise,
And he, his namesake, whose oft-baffled foes
Shrunk from his deeds of chivalrous emprize:
Land of Albania, let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men!
The cross descends, thy minarets arise,
And the pale crescent sparkles in the glen,
Through many a cypress grove within each city’s ken.

XXXIX

Childe Harold sail’d, and pass’d the barren spot
Where sad Penelope o’erlook’d the wave;
And onward view’d the mount, not yet forgot,
The lover’s refuge, and the Lesbian’s grave.
Dark Sappho, could not verse immortal save
That breast imbued with such immortal fire?
Could she not live who life eternal gave?
If life eternal may await the lyre,
That only Heaven to which Earth’s children may aspire.

XL

’T was on a Grecian autumn’s gentle eve
Childe Harold hail’d Leucadia’s cape afar,
A spot he long’d to see, nor cared to leave:
Oft did he mark the scenes of vanish’d war,
Actium, Lepanto, fatal Trafalgar,
Mark them unmoved, for he would not delight
(Born beneath some remote inglorious star)
In themes of bloody fray or gallant fight,
But loathed the bravo’s trade and laugh’d at marshal wight.

XLI

But when he saw the evening star above
Leucadia’s far-projecting rock of woe,
And hail’d the last resort of fruitless love,
He felt, or deem’d he felt, no common glow:
And as the stately vessel glided slow
Beneath the shadow of that ancient mount,
He watch’d the billows’ melancholy flow;
And, sunk albeit in thought as he was wont,
More placid seem’d his eye and smooth his pallid front.

XLII

Morn dawns; and with it stern Albania’s hills,
Dark Suli’s rocks, and Pindus’ inland peak,
Robed half in mist, bedew’d with snowy rills,
Array’d in many a dun and purple streak,
Arise; and, as the clouds along them break,
Disclose the dwelling of the mountaineer:
Here roams the wolf, the eagle whets his beak,

Birds, beasts of prey, and wilder men appear,
And gathering storms around convulse the closing year.

XLIII

Now Harold felt himself at length alone,
And bade to Christian tongues a long adieu;
Now he adventured on a shore unknown,
Which all admire but many dread to view:
His breast was arm'd 'gainst fate, his wants were few;
Peril he sought not, but ne'er shrank to meet:
The scene was savage, but the scene was new;
This made the ceaseless toil of travel sweet,
Beat back keen winter's blast, and welcomed summer's heat.

XLIV

Here the red cross (for still the cross is here,
Though sadly scoff'd at by the circumcised)
Forgets that pride to pamper'd priesthood dear, —
Churchman and votary alike despised.
Foul Superstition! howsoe'er disguised,
Idol, saint, virgin, prophet, crescent, cross,
For whatsoever symbol thou art prized,
Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss!
Who from true worship's gold can separate thy dross?

XLV

Ambracia's gulf behold, where once was lost
A world for woman, lovely, harmless thing!
In yonder rippling bay, their naval host
Did many a Roman chief and Asian king
To doubtful conflict, certain slaughter bring.
Look where the second Cæsar's trophies rose,
Now, like the hands that rear'd them, withering!
Imperial anarchs, doubling human woes!
God, was thy globe ordain'd for such to win and lose?

XLVI

From the dark barriers of that rugged clime,
Ev'n to the centre of Illyria's vales,
Childe Harold pass'd o'er many a mount sublime,
Through lands scarce noticed in historic tales;
Yet in famed Attica such lovely dales
Are rarely seen; nor can fair Tempe boast
A charm they know not; loved Parnassus fails,
Though classic ground and consecrated most,
To match some spots that lurk within this lowering coast.

XLVII

He pass'd bleak Pindus, Acherusia's lake,
And left the primal city of the land,
And onwards did his further journey take
To greet Albania's chief, whose dread command
Is lawless law; for with a bloody hand
He sways a nation, turbulent and bold:
Yet here and there some daring mountain-band
Disdain his power, and from their rocky hold
Hurl their defiance far, nor yield, unless to gold.

XLVIII

Monastic Zitza, from thy shady brow,
Thou small, but favour'd spot of holy ground!
Where'er we gaze, around, above, below,
What rainbow tints, what magic charms are found!
Rock, river, forest, mountain, all abound,
And bluest skies that harmonise the whole;
Beneath, the distant torrent's rushing sound
Tells where the volumed cataract doth roll
Between those hanging rocks, that shock yet please the soul.

XLIX

Amidst the grove that crowns yon tufted hill,
Which, were it not for many a mountain nigh

Rising in lofty ranks, and loftier still
Might well itself be deem'd of dignity,
The convent's white walls glisten fair on high:
Here dwells the caloyer, nor rude is he,
Nor niggard of his cheer; the passer by
Is welcome still; nor heedless will he flee 440
From hence, if he delight kind Nature's sheen to see.

L

Here in the sultriest season let him rest,
Fresh is the green beneath those aged trees;
Here winds of gentlest wing will fan his breast,
From heaven itself he may inhale the breeze.
The plain is far beneath — oh! let him seize
Pure pleasure while he can; the scorching ray
Here pierceth not, impregnate with disease:
Then let his length the loitering pilgrim lay,
And gaze, untired, the morn, the noon, the eve away. 450

LI

Dusky and huge, enlarging on the sight,
Nature's volcanic amphitheatre,
Chimæra's alps extend from left to right:
Beneath, a living valley seems to stir;
Flocks play, trees wave, streams flow, the mountain-fir
Nodding above; behold black Acheron,
Once consecrated to the sepulchre!
Pluto, if this be hell I look upon,
Close shamed Elysium's gates, my shade shall seek for none. 459

LII

Ne city's towers pollute the lovely view;
Unseen is Yanina, though not remote,
Veil'd by the screen of hills; here men are few,
Scanty the hamlet, rare the lonely cot:
But, peering down each precipice, the goat
Browseth; and, pensive o'er his scatter'd flock,
The little shepherd in his white capote
Doth lean his boyish form along the rock,
Or in his cave awaits the tempest's short-lived shock.

LIII

Oh! where, Dodona, is thine aged grove,
Prophetic fount, and oracle divine? 470
What valley echo'd the response of Jove?
What trace remaineth of the Thunderer's shrine?
All, all forgotten — and shall man repine
That his frail bonds to fleeting life are broke?
Cease, fool, the fate of gods may well be thine!
Wouldst thou survive the marble or the oak,
When nations, tongues, and worlds must sink beneath the stroke?

LIV

Epirus' bounds recede and mountains fail;
Tired of up-gazing still, the wearied eye
Reposes gladly on as smooth a vale 480
As ever Spring yclad in grassy dye.
Ev'n on a plain no humble beauties lie,
Where some bold river breaks the long expanse,
And woods along the banks are waving high,
Whose shadows in the glassy waters dance,
Or with the moonbeam sleep in midnight's solemn trance.

LV

The sun had sunk behind vast Tomerit,
And Laos wide and fierce came roaring by;
The shades of wonted night were gathering yet,
When, down the steep banks winding warily, 490
Childe Harold saw, like meteors in the sky,
The glittering minarets of Tepalen,
Whose walls o'erlook the stream; and drawing nigh,
He heard the busy hum of warrior-men
Swelling the breeze that sigh'd along the lengthening glen.

LVI

He pass'd the sacred Haram's silent tower,
And underneath the wide o'erarching gate

Survey'd the dwelling of this chief of power,
Where all around proclaim'd his high estate.
Amidst no common pomp the despot sate,
While busy preparation shook the court,
Slaves, eunuchs, soldiers, guests, and santons wait;
Within, a palace, and without, a fort:
Here men of every clime appear to make resort.

LVII

Richly caparison'd, a ready row
Of armèd horse and many a warlike store
Circled the wide extending court below;
Above, strange groups adorn'd the corridor;
And oft-times through the area's echoing door
Some high-capp'd Tartar spurr'd his steed away:
The Turk, the Greek, the Albanian, and the Moor,
Here mingled in their many-hued array,
While the deep war-drum's sound announced the close of day.

LVIII

The wild Albanian kirtled to his knee,
With shawl-girt head and ornamented gun,
And gold-embroider'd garments fair to see;
The crimson-scarfèd men of Macedon;
The Delhi with his cap of terror on,
And crooked glaive; the lively, supple Greek;
And swarthy Nubia's mutilated son;
The bearded Turk, that rarely deigns to speak,
Master of all around, too potent to be meek,

LIX

Are mix'd conspicuous: some recline in groups,
Scanning the motley scene that varies round;
There some grave Moslem to devotion stoops;
And some that smoke, and some that play, are found;
Here the Albanian proudly treads the ground;
Half-whispering there the Greek is heard to prate;
Hark! from the mosque the nightly solemn sound,
The Muezzin's call doth shake the minaret,
'There is no god but God!—to prayer—lo! God is great!'

LX

Just at this season Ramazani's fast
Through the long day its penance did maintain;
But when the lingering twilight hour was past,
Revel and feast assumed the rule again.
Now all was bustle, and the menial train
Prepared and spread the plenteous board within;
The vacant gallery now seem'd made in vain,
But from the chambers came the mingling din,
As page and slave anon were passing out and in.

LXI

Here woman's voice is never heard: apart,
And scarce permitted, guarded, veil'd, to move,
She yields to one her person and her heart,
Tamed to her cage, nor feels a wish to rove:
For, not unhappy in her master's love,
And joyful in a mother's gentlest cares,
Blest cares! all other feelings far above!
Herself more sweetly rears the babe she bears,
Who never quits the breast no meaner passion shares.

LXII

In marble-paved pavilion, where a spring
Of living water from the centre rose,
Whose bubbling did a genial freshness fling,
And soft voluptuous couches breathed repose,
Ali reclined, a man of war and woes:
Yet in his lineaments ye cannot trace,
While Gentleness her milder radiance throws
Along that aged venerable face,
The deeds that lurk beneath and stain him with disgrace.

LXIII

It is not that yon hoary lengthening beard
Ill suits the passions which belong to youth;
Love conquers age — so Hafiz hath averr'd,
So sings the Teian, and he sings in sooth —
But crimes that scorn the tender voice of Ruth,
Beseeming all men ill but most the man
In years, have mark'd him with a tiger's tooth:
Blood follows blood, and, through their mortal span,
In bloodier acts conclude those who with blood began.

LXIV

'Mid many things most new to ear and eye
The pilgrim rested here his weary feet,
And gazed around on Moslem luxury,
Till quickly wearied with that spacious seat
Of Wealth and Wantonness, the choice retreat
Of sated Grandeur from the city's noise:
And were it humbler it in sooth were sweet;
But Peace abhorreth artificial joys,
And Pleasure, leagued with Pomp, the zest of both destroys.

LXV

Fierce are Albania's children, yet they lack
Not virtues, were those virtues more mature.
Where is the foe that ever saw their back?
Who can so well the toil of war endure?
Their native fastnesses not more secure
Than they in doubtful time of troublous need;
Their wrath how deadly! but their friendship sure,
When Gratitude or Valour bids them bleed,
Unshaken rushing on where'er their chief may lead.

LXVI

Childe Harold saw them in their chieftain's tower,
Thronging to war in splendour and success;
And after view'd them, when, within their power,
Himself awhile the victim of distress, —
That saddening hour when bad men hotlier press;
But these did shelter him beneath their roof,
When less barbarians would have cheer'd him less,
And fellow-countrymen have stood aloof —
In aught that tries the heart how few withstand the proof!

LXVII

It chanced that adverse winds once drove his bark
Full on the coast of Suli's shaggy shore,
When all around was desolate and dark;
To land was perilous, to sojourn, more;
Yet for a while the mariners forbore,
Dubious to trust where treachery might lurk:
At length they ventured forth, though doubting sore
That those who loathe alike the Frank and Turk
Might once again renew their ancient butcher-work.

LXVIII

Vain fear! the Suliotes stretch'd the welcome hand,
Led them o'er rocks and past the dangerous swamp,
Kinder than polish'd slaves though not so bland,
And piled the hearth, and wrung their garments damp,
And fill'd the bowl, and trimm'd the cheerful lamp,
And spread their fare, though homely, all they had:
Such conduct bears Philanthropy's rare stamp —
To rest the weary and to soothe the sad,
Doth lesson happier men, and shames at least the bad.

LXIX

It came to pass that when he did address
Himself to quit at length this mountain-land,
Combined marauders, half-way, barr'd egress,

And wasted far and near with glaive and brand;
And therefore did he take a trusty band
To traverse Acarnania's forest wide,
In war well season'd, and with labours tann'd,
Till he did greet white Achelous' tide,
And from his further bank Ætolia's wolds espied.

LXX

Where lone Utraikey forms its circling cove,
And weary waves retire to gleam at rest,
How brown the foliage of the green hill's grove,
Nodding at midnight o'er the calm bay's breast,
As winds come lightly whispering from the west,
Kissing, not ruffling, the blue deep's serene: —
Here Harold was received, a welcome guest;
Nor did he pass unmoved the gentle scene,
For many a joy could he from Night's soft presence glean.

LXXI

On the smooth shore the night-fires brightly blazed,
The feast was done, the red wine circling fast,
And he that unawares had there ygazed
With gaping wonderment had stared aghast;
For ere night's midmost, stillest hour was past,
The native revels of the troop began;
Each Palikar his sabre from him cast,
And bounding hand in hand, man link'd to man,
Yelling their uncouth dirge, long daunced the kirtled clan.

LXXII

Childe Harold at a little distance stood,
And view'd, but not displeased, the revelrie,
Nor hated harmless mirth, however rude:
In sooth, it was no vulgar sight to see
Their barbarous, yet their not indecent, glee,
And, as the flames along their faces gleam'd,
Their gestures nimble, dark eyes flashing free,
The long wild locks that to their girdles stream'd,
While thus in concert they this lay half sang, half scream'd: —

1

Tambourgi! Tambourgi! thy 'larum afar
Gives hope to the valiant and promise of war;
All the sons of the mountains arise at the note,
Chimariot, Illyrian, and dark Suliote!

2

Oh! who is more brave than a dark Suliote,
In his snowy camese and his shaggy capote?
To the wolf and the vulture he leaves his wild flock,
And descends to the plain like the stream from the rock.

3

Shall the sons of Chimari, who never forgive
The fault of a friend, bid an enemy live?
Let those guns so unerring such vengeance forego?
What mark is so fair as the breast of a foe?

4

Macedonia sends forth her invincible race;
For a time they abandon the cave and the chase:
But those scarfs of blood-red shall be redder, before
The sabre is sheathed and the battle is o'er.

5

Then the pirates of Parga that dwell by the waves,
And teach the pale Franks what it is to be slaves,
Shall leave on the beach the long galley and oar,
And track to his covert the captive on shore.

6

I ask not the pleasures that riches supply,
My sabre shall win what the feeble must buy;
Shall win the young bride with her long flowing hair,
And many a maid from her mother shall tear.

7

I love the fair face of the maid in her youth,
Her caresses shall lull me, her music shall soothe;
Let her bring from the chamber her many-toned lyre,
And sing us a song on the fall of her sire.

8

Remember the moment when Previsa fell,
The shrieks of the conquer'd, the conquerors' yell;

The roofs that we fired, and the plunder we shared,
The wealthy we slaughter'd, the lovely we spared.

9

I talk not of mercy, I talk not of fear;
He neither must know who would serve the Vizier:
Since the days of our prophet the Crescent ne'er saw
A chief ever glorious like Ali Pashaw.

10

Dark Muchtar his son to the Danube is sped,
Let the yellow-hair'd Giaours view his horse-tail with dread;
When his Delhis come dashing in blood o'er the banks,
How few shall escape from the Muscovite ranks!

11

Selictar, unsheathe then our chief's scimitār:
Tambourgi, thy 'larum gives promise of war;
Ye mountains, that see us descend to the shore,
Shall view us as victors, or view us no more!

LXXIII

Fair Greece, sad relic of departed worth!
Immortal, though no more; though fallen, great!
Who now shall lead thy scatter'd children forth,
And long accustom'd bondage uncreate?
Not such thy sons who whilome did await,
The hopeless warriors of a willing doom,
In bleak Thermopylæ's sepulchral strait —
Oh! who that gallant spirit shall resume,
Leap from Eurotas' banks, and call thee from the tomb?

LXXIV

Spirit of freedom! when on Phyle's brow
Thou sat'st with Thrasybulus and his train,
Couldst thou forbode the dismal hour which now
Dims the green beauties of thine Attic plain?
Not thirty tyrants now enforce the chain,
But every carle can lord it o'er thy land;
Nor rise thy sons, but idly rail in vain,
Trembling beneath the scourge of Turkish hand,
From birth till death enslaved; in word, in deed, unmann'd.

LXXV

In all save form alone, how changed! and who
That marks the fire still sparkling in each eye,
Who but would deem their bosoms burn'd anew
With thy unquenchèd beam, lost Liberty!
And many dream withal the hour is nigh
That gives them back their fathers' heritage:
For foreign arms and aid they fondly sigh,
Nor solely dare encounter hostile rage,
Or tear their name defiled from Slavery's mournful page.

LXXVI

Hereditary bondsmen! know ye not
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?
By their right arms the conquest must be wrought?
Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye? no!
True, they may lay your proud despoilers low,
But not for you will Freedom's altars flame.
Shades of the Helots, triumph o'er your foe!
Greece, change thy lords, thy state is still the same;
Thy glorious day is o'er, but not thine years of shame.

LXXVII

The city won for Allah from the Giaour,
The Giaour from Othman's race again may wrest;
And the Serai's impenetrable tower
Receive the fiery Frank, her former guest;
Or Wahab's rebel brood, who dared divest
The prophet's tomb of all its pious spoil,
May wind their path of blood along the West;
But ne'er will freedom seek this fated soil,
But slave succeed to slave through years of endless toil.

LXXVIII

Yet mark their mirth — ere lenten days begin,
That penance which their holy rites prepare

To shrive from man his weight of mortal sin
By daily abstinence and nightly prayer;
But ere his sackcloth garb Repentance wear,
Some days of joyaunce are decreed to all,
To take of pleasaunce each his secret share,
In motley robe to dance at masking ball,
And join the mimic train of merry Carnival.

LXXIX

And whose more rife with merriment than thine,
Oh Stamboul, once the empress of their reign?
Though turbans now pollute Sophia's shrine,
And Greece her very altars eyes in vain;
(Alas, her woes will still pervade my strain!)
Gay were her minstrels once, for free her throng,
All felt the common joy they now must feign,
Nor oft I've seen such sight nor heard such song,
As woo'd the eye and thrill'd the Bosphorus along.

LXXX

Loud was the lightsome tumult on the shore,
Oft Music changed but never ceased her tone,
And timely echo'd back the measured oar,
And rippling waters made a pleasant moan:
The Queen of tides on high consenting shone,
And when a transient breeze swept o'er the wave,
'Twas, as if darting from her heavenly throne,
A brighter glance her form reflected gave,
Till sparkling billows seem'd to light the banks they lave.

LXXXI

Glanced many a light caïque along the foam,
Danced on the shore the daughters of the land,
Ne thought had man or maid of rest or home,
While many a languid eye and thrilling hand
Exchanged the look few bosoms may withstand,
Or gently prest, return'd the pressure still:
Oh Love! young Love! bound in thy rosy band,
Let sage or cynic prattle as he will,
These hours, and only these, redeem Life's years of ill!

LXXXII

But, midst the throng in merry masquerade,
Lurk there no hearts that throb with secret pain,
Even through the closest searment half betray'd?
To such the gentle murmurs of the main
Seem to re-echo all they mourn in vain;
To such the gladness of the gamesome crowd
Is source of wayward thought and stern disdain:
How do they loathe the laughter idly loud,
And long to change the robe of revel for the shroud!

LXXXIII

This must he feel, the true-born son of Greece,
If Greece one true-born patriot still can boast,—
Not such as prate of war but skulk in peace,
The bondsman's peace, who sighs for all he lost,
Yet with smooth smile his tyrant can accost,
And wield the slavish sickle, not the sword:
Ah, Greece, they love thee least who owe thee most—
Their birth, their blood, and that sublime record
Of hero sires who shame thy now degenerated horde!

LXXXIV

When riseth Lacedæmon's hardihood,
When Thebes Epaminondas rears again,

When Athens' children are with hearts endued,
When Grecian mothers shall give birth to men,
Then may'st thou be restored, but not till then.
A thousand years scarce serve to form a state;
An hour may lay it in the dust; and when
Can man its shatter'd splendour renovate,
Recall its virtues back and vanquish Time and Fate?

LXXXV

And yet how lovely in thine age of woe,
Land of lost gods and godlike men, art thou!
Thy vales of evergreen, thy hills of snow,
Proclaim thee Nature's varied favourite now;
Thy fanes, thy temples to thy surface bow,
Commingling slowly with heroic earth,
Broke by the share of every rustic plough
(So perish monuments of mortal birth,
So perish all in turn, save well-recorded Worth);

LXXXVI

Save where some solitary column mourns
Above its prostrate brethren of the cave;
Save where Tritonia's airy shrine adorns
Colonna's cliff, and gleams along the wave;
Save o'er some warrior's half-forgotten grave,
Where the gray stones and unmolested grass
Ages, but not oblivion, feebly brave,
While strangers only not regardless pass,
Lingering like me, perchance, to gaze, and sigh 'Alas!'

LXXXVII

Yet are thy skies as blue, thy crags as wild;
Sweet are thy groves, and verdant are thy fields,
Thine olive ripe as when Minerva smiled,
And still his honied wealth Hymettus yields;
There the blithe bee his fragrant fortress builds,
The freeborn wanderer of thy mountain-air;
Apollo still thy long, long summer gilds,
Still in his beam Mendeli's marbles glare;
Art, Glory, Freedom fail, but Nature still is fair.

LXXXVIII

Where'er we tread 'tis haunted, holy ground;
No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould,
But one vast realm of wonder spreads around,
And all the Muse's tales seem truly told,
Till the sense aches with gazing to behold
The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon:
Each hill and dale, each deepening glen and wold
Defies the power which crush'd thy temples gone:
Age shakes Athena's tower but spares gray Marathon.

LXXXIX

The sun, the soil, but not the slave, the same;
Unchanged in all except its foreign lord —
Preserves alike its bounds and boundless fame
The Battle-field, where Persia's victim horde
First bow'd beneath the brunt of Hellas' sword,
As on the morn to distant Glory dear,
When Marathon became a magic word;
Which utter'd, to the hearer's eye appear
The camp, the host, the fight, the conqueror's career,

XC

The flying Mede, his shaftless broken bow;
The fiery Greek, his red pursuing spear;
Mountains above, Earth's, Ocean's plain below;
Death in the front, Destruction in the rear!
Such was the scene — what now remaineth here?

What sacred trophy marks the hallow'd ground,
Recording Freedom's smile and Asia's tear?
The rifled urn, the violated mound,
The dust thy courser's hoof, rude stranger, spurns around.

XCI

Yet to the remnants of thy splendour past
Shall pilgrims, pensive, but unwearied, throng;
Long shall the voyager, with th' Ionian blast,
Hail the bright clime of battle and of song;
Long shall thine annals and immortal tongue
Fill with thy fame the youth of many a shore; 860
Boast of the aged! lesson of the young!
Which sages venerate and bards adore,
As Pallas and the Muse unveil their awful lore.

XCII

The parted bosom clings to wonted home,
If aught that's kindred cheer the welcome hearth:
He that is lonely, hither let him roam,
And gaze complacent on congenial earth.
Greece is no lightsome land of social mirth;
But he whom Sadness sootheth may abide,
And scarce regret the region of his birth,
When wandering slow by Delphi's sacred side, 871
Or gazing o'er the plains where Greek and Persian died.

XCIII

Let such approach this consecrated land,
And pass in peace along the magic waste;
But spare its relics — let no busy hand
Deface the scenes, already how defaced!
Not for such purpose were these altars placed;
Revere the remnants nations once revered:
So may our country's name be undisgraced,
So may'st thou prosper where thy youth was rear'd, 880
By every honest joy of love and life endear'd!

XCIV

For thee, who thus in too protracted song
Hast soothed thine idlesse with inglorious lays,
Soon shall thy voice be lost amid the throng
Of louder minstrels in these later days:
To such resign the strife for fading bays;
Ill may such contest now the spirit move
Which heeds nor keen reproach nor partial praise,
Since cold each kinder heart that might approve,
And none are left to please when none are left to love. 890

XCV

Thou too art gone, thou loved and lovely one!
Whom youth and youth's affections bound to me;
Who did for me what none beside have done,
Nor shrank from one albeit unworthy thee.
What is my being? thou hast ceased to be!
Nor staid to welcome here thy wanderer home,
Who mourns o'er hours which we no more shall see —
Would they had never been, or were to come!
Would he had ne'er return'd to find fresh cause to roam!

XCVI

Oh, ever loving, lovely, and beloved! 900
How selfish Sorrow ponders on the past,
And clings to thoughts now better far removed!
But Time shall tear thy shadow from me last.
All thou couldst have of mine, stern Death, thou hast, —
The parent, friend, and now the more than friend;
Ne'er yet for one thine arrows flew so fast,
And grief with grief continuing still to blend,
Hath snatch'd the little joy that life had yet to lend.

XCVII

Then must I plunge again into the crowd,
And follow all that Peace disdains to seek?
Where Revel calls, and Laughter, vainly loud,
False to the heart, distorts the hollow cheek,
To leave the flagging spirit doubly weak!
Still o'er the features, which perforce they cheer,
To feign the pleasure or conceal the pique,
Smiles form the channel of a future tear,
Or raise the writhing lip with ill-dissembled sneer.

XCVIII

What is the worst of woes that wait on age?
What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow?
To view each loved one blotted from life's page,
And be alone on earth, as I am now.
Before the Chastener humbly let me bow,
O'er hearts divided and o'er hopes destroy'd:
Roll on, vain days! full reckless may ye flow,
Since Time hath reft whate'er my soul enjoy'd,
And with the ills of Eld mine earlier years alloy'd.

CANTO THE THIRD

Afin que cette application vous forçât de penser à autre chose: il n'y a en vérité de remède que celui-là et le temps. — *Lettre du Roi de Prusse à D'Alembert, Sept.* 7, 1776.

I

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child,
Ada, sole daughter of my house and heart?
When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,
And then we parted, — not as now we part,
But with a hope. —
Awaking with a start,
The waters heave around me, and on high
The winds lift up their voices: I depart,
Whither I know not; but the hour's gone by,
When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.

II

Once more upon the waters, yet once more!
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar!
Swift be their guidance wheresoe'er it lead!
Though the strain'd mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvass fluttering strew the gale,
Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
Flung from the rock on Ocean's foam to sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail.

III

In my youth's summer I did sing of One,
The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind;
Again I seize the theme, then but begun,
And bear it with me, as the rushing wind
Bears the cloud onwards: in that Tale I find
The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears,
Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,
O'er which all heavily the journeying years
Plod the last sands of life, — where not a flower appears.

IV

Since my young days of passion — joy, or pain,
Perchance my heart and harp have lost a string,
And both may jar; it may be that in vain
I would essay as I have sung to sing.
Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I cling,
So that it wean me from the weary dream
Of selfish grief or gladness — so it fling
Forgetfulness around me — it shall seem
To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful theme.

V

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,
So that no wonder waits him; nor below
Can love, or sorrow, fame, ambition, strife,
Cut to his heart again with the keen knife
Of silent, sharp endurance: he can tell
Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife
With airy images, and shapes which dwell
Still unimpair'd, though old, in the soul's haunted cell.

VI

'T is to create, and in creating live
A being more intense, that we endow
With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now.
What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
Invisible but gazing, as I glow
Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,
And feeling still with thee in my crush'd feelings' dearth.

VII

Yet must I think less wildly:—I *have* thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:
And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,
My springs of life were poison'd. 'T is too late!
Yet am I changed; though still enough the same
In strength to bear what time can not abate,
And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate.

VIII

Something too much of this: but now 't is past,
And the spell closes with its silent seal.
Long absent HAROLD re-appears at last,—
He of the breast which fain no more would feel,
Wrung with the wounds which kill not but ne'er heal;
Yet Time, who changes all, had alter'd him
In soul and aspect as in age: years steal
Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb,
And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.

IX

His had been quaff'd too quickly, and he found
The dregs were wormwood; but he fill'd again,
And from a purer fount, on holier ground,
And deem'd its spring perpetual—but in vain!
Still round him clung invisibly a chain
Which gall'd for ever, fettering though unseen,
And heavy though it clank'd not; worn with pain,
Which pined although it spoke not, and grew keen,
Entering with every step he took through many a scene.

X

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mix'd
Again in fancied safety with his kind,
And deem'd his spirit now so firmly fix'd
And sheathed with an invulnerable mind,
That, if no joy, no sorrow lurk'd behind;
And he, as one, might 'midst the many stand
Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find
Fit speculation, such as in strange land
He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand.

XI

But who can view the ripen'd rose nor seek
To wear it? who can curiously behold
The smoothness and the sheen of beauty's cheek,
Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?
Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold
The star which rises o'er her steep, nor climb?

Harold, once more within the vortex, roll'd
On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's fond prime.

XII

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with Man, with whom he held
Little in common; — untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quell'd
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompell'd,
He would not yield dominion of his mind
To spirits against whom his own rebell'd;
Proud though in desolation; which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

XIII

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his home;
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tome
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
For Nature's pages glass'd by sunbeams on the lake.

XIV

Like the Chaldean he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright
As their own beams; and earth, and earth-born jars,
And human frailties, were forgotten quite.
Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
He had been happy; but this clay will sink
Its spark immortal, envying it the light
To which it mounts, as if to break the link
That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

XV

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
Droop'd as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing,
To whom the boundless air alone were home.
Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
As eagerly the barr'd-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dome
Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat
Of his impeded soul would through his bosom eat.

XVI

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
With nought of hope left, but with less of gloom;
The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
That all was over on this side the tomb,
Had made Despair a smilingness assume,
Which, though 't were wild, — as on the plunder'd wreck
When mariners would madly meet their doom
With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck, —
Did yet inspire a cheer which he forbore to check.

XVII

Stop! — for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!
An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
Is the spot mark'd with no colossal bust,
Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so,
As the ground was before, thus let it be; —
How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!
And is this all the world has gained by thee,
Thou first and last of fields, king-making Victory?

XVIII

And Harold stands upon this place of skulls,
The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo!

How in an hour the power which gave annuls
Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!
In 'pride of place' here last the eagle flew,
Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain,
Pierced by the shaft of banded nations through;
Ambition's life and labours all were vain;
He wears the shatter'd links of the world's broken chain.

XIX

Fit retribution! Gaul may champ the bit
And foam in fetters; — but is Earth more free?
Did nations combat to make *One* submit;
Or league to teach all kings true sovereignty?
What! shall reviving Thraldom again be
The patch'd-up idol of enlighten'd days?
Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we
Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lowly gaze
And servile knees to thrones? No; *prove* before ye praise!

XX

If not, o'er one fallen despot boast no more!
In vain fair cheeks were furrow'd with hot tears
For Europe's flowers long rooted up before
The trampler of her vineyards; in vain years
Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,
Have all been borne, and broken by the accord
Of roused-up millions: all that most endears
Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a sword
Such as Harmodius drew on Athens' tyrant lord.

XXI

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gather'd then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men:
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell; —
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

XXII

Did ye not hear it? — No; 't was but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet —
But hark! — that heavy sound breaks in once more
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! Arm! it is — it is — the cannon's opening roar!

XXIII

Within a window'd niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deem'd it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretch'd his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell:
He rush'd into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

XXIV

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness:

And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!

XXV

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While throng'd the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips — 'The foe! They come! they come!'

XXVI

And wild and high the 'Cameron's gathering' rose!
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
Have heard, and heard too have her Saxon foes: —
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears!

XXVII

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave, — alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

XXVIII

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms, — the day
Battle's magnificently-stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is cover'd thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,
Rider and horse, — friend, foe, — in one red burial blent!

XXIX

Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps than mine;
Yet one I would select from that proud throng,
Partly because they blend me with his line,
And partly that I did his sire some wrong,
And partly that bright names will hallow song;
And his was of the bravest, and when shower'd
The death-bolts deadliest the thinn'd files along,
Even where the thickest of war's tempest lower'd,
They reach'd no nobler breast than thine, young, gallant Howard!

XXX

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,
And mine were nothing, had I such to give;
But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,
Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,
And saw around me the wide field revive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring

Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turn'd from all she brought to those she could not bring.

XXXI

I turn'd to thee, to thousands, of whom each
And one as all a ghastly gap did make
In his own kind and kindred, whom to teach
Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake;
The Archangel's trump, not Glory's, must awake
Those whom they thirst for; though the sound of Fame
May for a moment soothe, it cannot slake
The fever of vain longing, and the name
So honour'd but assumes a stronger, bitterer claim.

XXXII

They mourn, but smile at length; and, smiling, mourn:
The tree will wither long before it fall;
The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn;
The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the hall
In massy hoariness; the ruin'd wall
Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone;
The bars survive the captive they enthral;
The day drags through though storms keep out the sun;
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on:

XXXIII

Even as a broken mirror, which the glass
In every fragment multiplies; and makes
A thousand images of one that was,
The same, and still the more, the more it breaks;
And thus the heart will do which not forsakes,
Living in shatter'd guise, and still, and cold,
And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow aches,
Yet withers on till all without is old,
Showing no visible sign, for such things are untold.

XXXIV

There is a very life in our despair,
Vitality of poison, a quick root
Which feeds these deadly branches: for it were
As nothing did we die; but Life will suit
Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,
Like to the apples on the Dead Sea's shore,
All ashes to the taste. Did man compute
Existence by enjoyment, and count o'er
Such hours 'gainst years of life, — say, would he name threescore?

XXXV

The Psalmist number'd out the years of man:
They are enough, and if thy tale be *true*,
Thou, who didst grudge him even that fleeting span,
More than enough, thou fatal Waterloo!
Millions of tongues record thee, and anew
Their children's lips shall echo them, and say —
'Here, where the sword united nations drew,
Our countrymen were warring on that day!'
And this is much, and all which will not pass away.

XXXVI

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of men,
Whose spirit antithetically mixt
One moment of the mightiest, and again
On little objects with like firmness fixt,
Extreme in all things! hadst thou been betwixt,
Thy throne had still been thine, or never been;
For daring made thy rise as fall: thou seek'st
Even now to re-assume the imperial mien,
And shake again the world, the Thunderer of the scene!

XXXVII

Conqueror and captive of the earth art thou!
She trembles at thee still, and thy wild name
Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds than now

That thou art nothing, save the jest of Fame,
Who woo'd thee once, thy vassal, and became
The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou wert
A god unto thyself; nor less the same
To the astounded kingdoms all inert,
Who deem'd thee for a time whate'er thou didst assert.

XXXVIII

Oh, more or less than man — in high or low,
Battling with nations, flying from the field;
Now making monarchs' necks thy footstool, now
More than thy meanest soldier taught to yield:
An empire thou couldst crush, command, rebuild,
But govern not thy pettiest passion, nor,
However deeply in men's spirits skill'd,
Look through thine own, nor curb the lust of war,
Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the loftiest star.

XXXIX

Yet well thy soul hath brook'd the turning tide
With that untaught innate philosophy,
Which, be it wisdom, coldness, or deep pride,
Is gall and wormwood to an enemy.
When the whole host of hatred stood hard by,
To watch and mock thee shrinking, thou hast smiled
With a sedate and all-enduring eye;
When Fortune fled her spoil'd and favourite child,
He stood unbow'd beneath the ills upon him piled.

XL

Sager than in thy fortunes; for in them
Ambition steel'd thee on too far to show
That just habitual scorn, which could contemn
Men and their thoughts; 't was wise to feel, not so
To wear it ever on thy lip and brow,
And spurn the instruments thou wert to use
Till they were turn'd unto thine overthrow:
'T is but a worthless world to win or lose,
So hath it proved to thee and all such lot who choose.

XLI

If, like a tower upon a headlong rock,
Thou hadst been made to stand or fall alone,
Such scorn of man had help'd to brave the shock;
But men's thoughts were the steps which paved thy throne,
Their admiration thy best weapon shone;
The part of Philip's son was thine, not then
(Unless aside thy purple had been thrown)
Like stern Diogenes to mock at men;
For sceptred cynics earth were far too wide a den.

XLII

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
And *there* hath been thy bane; there is a fire
And motion of the soul which will not dwell
In its own narrow being, but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

XLIII

This makes the madmen who have made men mad
By their contagion, — Conquerors and Kings,
Founders of sects and systems, to whom add
Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet things
Which stir too strongly the soul's secret springs,
And are themselves the fools to those they fool;
Envied, yet how unenviable! what stings
Are theirs! One breast laid open were a school
Which would unteach mankind the lust to shine or rule.

XLIV

Their breath is agitation, and their life
A storm whereon they ride, to sink at last;
And yet so nursed and bigoted to strife,
That should their days, surviving perils past,
Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast
With sorrow and supineness, and so die;
Even as a flame unfed which runs to waste
With its own flickering, or a sword laid by,
Which eats into itself and rusts ingloriously.

XLV

He who ascends to mountain-tops, shall find
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
Must look down on the hate of those below.
Though high *above* the sun of glory glow,
And far *beneath* the earth and ocean spread,
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
Contending tempests on his naked head,
And thus reward the toils which to those summits led.

XLVI

Away with these ! true Wisdom's world will be
Within its own creation, or in thine,
Maternal Nature ! for who teems like thee,
Thus on the banks of thy majestic Rhine?
There Harold gazes on a work divine,
A blending of all beauties, — streams and dells,
Fruit, foliage, crag, wood, cornfield, mountain, vine,
And chiefless castles breathing stern farewells
From gray but leafy walls, where Ruin greenly dwells.

XLVII

And there they stand, as stands a lofty mind,
Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,
All tenantless, save to the crannying wind,
Or holding dark communion with the cloud.
There was a day when they were young and proud,
Banners on high, and battles pass'd below;
But they who fought are in a bloody shroud,
And those which waved are shredless dust ere now,
And the bleak battlements shall bear no future blow.

XLVIII

Beneath these battlements, within those walls,
Power dwelt amidst her passions; in proud state
Each robber chief upheld his armèd halls,
Doing his evil will, nor less elate
Than mightier heroes of a longer date.
What want these outlaws conquerors should have,
But History's purchased page to call them great ?
A wider space, an ornamented grave ?
Their hopes were not less warm, their souls were full as brave.

XLIX

In their baronial feuds and single fields,
What deeds of prowess unrecorded died
And Love, which lent a blazon to thei shields
With emblems well devised by amorou pride,
Through all the mail of iron hearts would glide:
But still their flame was fierceness, and drew on
Keen contest and destruction near allied;
And many a tower for some fair mischief won,
Saw the discolour'd Rhine beneath its ruin run.

L

But Thou, exulting and abounding river !
Making thy waves a blessing as they flow
Through banks whose beauty would endure for ever,
Could man but leave thy bright creation so,
Nor its fair promise from the surface mow

With the sharp scythe of conflict, — then to see
Thy valley of sweet waters, were to know
Earth paved like Heaven; and to seem such to me,
Even now what wants thy stream? — that it should Lethe be. 450

LI

A thousand battles have assail'd thy banks,
But these and half their fame have pass'd away,
And Slaughter heap'd on high his weltering ranks;
Their very graves are gone, and what are they?
Thy tide wash'd down the blood of yesterday,
And all was stainless, and on thy clear stream
Glass'd with its dancing light the sunny ray;
But o'er the blacken'd memory's blighting dream
Thy waves would vainly roll, all sweeping as they seem.

LII

Thus Harold inly said, and pass'd along,
Yet not insensibly to all which here 461
Awoke the jocund birds to early song
In glens which might have made even exile dear.
Though on his brow were graven lines austere,
And tranquil sternness which had ta'en the place
Of feelings fierier far but less severe,
Joy was not always absent from his face,
But o'er it in such scenes would steal with transient trace.

LIII

Nor was all love shut from him, though his days
Of passion had consumed themselves to dust. 470
It is in vain that we would coldly gaze
On such as smile upon us; the heart must
Leap kindly back to kindness, though disgust
Hath wean'd it from all wordlings: thus he felt,
For there was soft remembrance, and sweet trust
In one fond breast to which his own would melt,
And in its tenderer hour on that his bosom dwelt.

LIV

And he had learn'd to love (I know not why,
For this in such as him seems strange of mood) 479
The helpless looks of blooming infancy,
Even in its earliest nurture; what subdued,
To change like this, a mind so far imbued
With scorn of man, it little boots to know;
But thus it was; and though in solitude
Small power the nipp'd affections have to grow,
In him this glow'd when all beside had ceased to glow.

LV

And there was one soft breast, as hath been said,
Which unto his was bound by stronger ties
Than the church links withal; and, though unwed,
That love was pure, and, far above disguise, 490
Had stood the test of mortal enmities
Still undivided, and cemented more
By peril, dreaded most in female eyes;
But this was firm, and from a foreign shore
Well to that heart might his these absent greetings pour!

1

The castled crag of Drachenfels
Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine,
Whose breast of waters broadly swells
Between the banks which bear the vine;
And hills all rich with blossom'd trees, 500
And fields which promise corn and wine,
And scatter'd cities crowning these,
Whose far white walls along them shine,
Have strew'd a scene, which I should see
With double joy wert *thou* with me.

2

And peasant girls, with deep blue eyes
And hands which offer early flowers,
Walk smiling o'er this paradise;
Above, the frequent feudal towers
Through green leaves lift their walls of gray;
And many a rock which steeply lowers, 511
And noble arch in proud decay,
Look o'er this vale of vintage-bowers;

But one thing want these banks of Rhine,—
Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine!

3

I send the lilies given to me;
Though long before thy hand they touch,
I know that they must wither'd be,
But yet reject them not as such;
For I have cherish'd them as dear,
Because they yet may meet thine eye,
And guide thy soul to mine even here,
When thou behold'st them, drooping nigh,
And know'st them gather'd by the Rhine,
And offer'd from my heart to thine!

4

The river nobly foams and flows,
The charm of this enchanted ground,
And all its thousand turns disclose
Some fresher beauty varying round:
The haughtiest breast its wish might bound
Through life to dwell delighted here;
Nor could on earth a spot be found
To nature and to me so dear,
Could thy dear eyes in following mine
Still sweeten more these banks of Rhine!

LVI

By Coblentz, on a rise of gentle ground,
There is a small and simple pyramid,
Crowning the summit of the verdant mound;
Beneath its base are heroes' ashes hid,
Our enemy's,— but let not that forbid
Honour to Marceau! o'er whose early tomb
Tears, big tears, gush'd from the rough soldier's lid,
Lamenting and yet envying such a doom,
Falling for France whose rights he battled to resume.

LVII

Brief, brave, and glorious was his young career,—
His mourners were two hosts, his friends and foes;
And fitly may the stranger lingering here
Pray for his gallant spirit's bright repose;
For he was Freedom's champion, one of those,
The few in number, who had not o'erstept
The charter to chastise which she bestows
On such as wield her weapons; he had kept
The whiteness of his soul, and thus men o'er him wept.

LVIII

Here Ehrenbreitstein, with her shatter'd wall
Black with the miner's blast, upon her height
Yet shows of what she was, when shell and ball
Rebounding idly on her strength did light,—
A tower of victory! from whence the flight
Of baffled foes was watch'd along the plain:
But Peace destroy'd what War could never blight,
And laid those proud roofs bare to Summer's rain,
On which the iron shower for years had pour'd in vain.

LIX

Adieu to thee, fair Rhine! How long delighted
The stranger fain would linger on his way!
Thine is a scene alike where souls united
Or lonely Contemplation thus might stray;
And could the ceaseless vultures cease to prey
On self-condemning bosoms, it were here,
Where Nature, nor too sombre nor too gay,
Wild but not rude, awful yet not austere,
Is to the mellow Earth as Autumn to the year.

LX

Adieu to thee again! a vain adieu!
There can be no farewell to scene like thine;
The mind is colour'd by thy every hue;
And if reluctantly the eyes resign
Their cherish'd gaze upon thee, lovely Rhine,
'T is with the thankful glance of parting praise;
More mighty spots may rise, more glaring shine,
But none unite in one attaching maze
The brilliant, fair, and soft,— the glories of old days,

LXI

The negligently grand, the fruitful bloom
Of coming ripeness, the white city's sheen,

The rolling stream, the precipice's gloom,
The forest's growth, and Gothic walls between,
The wild rocks shaped as they had turrets been
In mockery of man's art; and these withal
A race of faces happy as the scene,
Whose fertile bounties here extend to all,
Still springing o'er thy banks, though Empires near them fall.

LXII

But these recede. Above me are the Alps,
The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,
And throned Eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
The avalanche — the thunderbolt of snow!
All that expands the spirit, yet appals,
Gather around these summits, as to show
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man below.

LXIII

But ere these matchless heights I dare to scan,
There is a spot should not be pass'd in vain, —
Morat! the proud, the patriot field! where man
May gaze on ghastly trophies of the slain,
Nor blush for those who conquer'd on that plain;
Here Burgundy bequeath'd his tombless host,
A bony heap, through ages to remain,
Themselves their monument; — the Stygian coast
Unsepulchred they roam'd, and shriek'd each wandering ghost.

LXIV

While Waterloo with Cannæ's carnage vies,
Morat and Marathon twin names shall stand;
They were true Glory's stainless victories,
Won by the unambitious heart and hand
Of a proud, brotherly, and civic band,
All unbought champions in no princely cause
Of vice-entail'd Corruption; they no land
Doom'd to bewail the blasphemy of laws
Making kings' rights divine, by some Draconic clause.

LXV

By a lone wall a lonelier column rears
A gray and grief-worn aspect of old days;
'T is the last remnant of the wreck of years,
And looks as with the wild-bewildered gaze
Of one to stone converted by amaze,
Yet still with consciousness; and there it stands
Making a marvel that it not decays,
When the coeval pride of human hands,
Levell'd Aventicum, hath strew'd her subject lands.

LXVI

And there — oh! sweet and sacred be the name! —
Julia, the daughter, the devoted, gave
Her youth to Heaven; her heart, beneath a claim
Nearest to Heaven's, broke o'er a father's grave.
Justice is sworn 'gainst tears, and hers would crave
The life she lived in; but the judge was just,
And then she died on him she could not save.
Their tomb was simple, and without a bust,
And held within their urn one mind, one heart, one dust.

LXVII

But these are deeds which should not pass away,
And names that must not wither, though the earth
Forgets her empires with a just decay,
The enslavers and the enslaved, their death and birth;
The high, the mountain-majesty of worth
Should be, and shall, survivor of its woe,
And from its immortality look forth
In the sun's face, like yonder Alpine snow,
Imperishably pure beyond all things below

LXVIII

Lake Leman woos me with its crystal face,
The mirror where the stars and mountains view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue.
There is too much of man here, to look through
With a fit mind the might which I behold;
But soon in me shall Loneliness renew
Thoughts hid, but not less cherish'd than of old,
Ere mingling with the herd had penn'd me in their fold.

LXIX

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind:
All are not fit with them to stir and toil,
Nor is it discontent to keep the mind
Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil
In the hot throng, where we become the spoil
Of our infection, till too late and long
We may deplore and struggle with the coil,
In wretched interchange of wrong for wrong
Midst a contentious world, striving where none are strong.

LXX

There, in a moment, we may plunge our years
In fatal penitence, and in the blight
Of our own soul turn all our blood to tears,
And colour things to come with hues of Night;
The race of life becomes a hopeless flight
To those that walk in darkness: on the sea,
The boldest steer but where their ports invite,
But there are wanderers o'er Eternity
Whose bark drives on and on, and anchor'd ne'er shall be.

LXXI

Is it not better, then, to be alone,
And love Earth only for its earthly sake?
By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,
Which feeds it as a mother who doth make
A fair but froward infant her own care,
Kissing its cries away as these awake;—
Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
Than join the crushing crowd, doom'd to inflict or bear?

LXXII

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture: I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.

LXXIII

And thus I am absorb'd, and this is life:
I look upon the peopled desert past,
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous, as the blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling.

LXXIV

And when at length the mind shall be all free
From what it hates in this degraded form,
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be
Existent happier in the fly and worm,—
When elements to elements conform,
And dust is as it should be, shall I not
Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm?
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each spot?
Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?

LXXV

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion? should I not contemn
All objects, if compared with these? and stem
A tide of suffering, rather than forego
Such feelings for the hard and worldly phlegm
Of those whose eyes are only turn'd below,
Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not glow?

LXXVI

But this is not my theme; and I return
To that which is immediate, and require
Those who find contemplation in the urn,
To look on One whose dust was once all fire,
A native of the land where I respire
The clear air for a while (a passing guest,
Where he became a being) whose desire
Was to be glorious; — 't was a foolish quest,
The which to gain and keep he sacrificed all rest.

LXXVII

Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,
The apostle of affliction, he who threw
Enchantment over passion, and from woe
Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first drew
The breath which made him wretched; yet he knew
How to make madness beautiful, and cast
O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly hue
Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they past
The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feelingly and fast.

LXXVIII

His love was passion's essence — as a tree
On fire by lightning; with ethereal flame
Kindled he was, and blasted; for to be
Thus, and enamour'd, were in him the same.
But his was not the love of living dame,
Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,
But of ideal beauty, which became
In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
Along his burning page, distemper'd though it seems.

LXXIX

This breathed itself to life in Julie, *this*
Invested her with all that 's wild and sweet;
This hallow'd, too, the memorable kiss
Which every morn his fever'd lip would greet,
From hers who but with friendship his would meet;
But to that gentle touch, through brain and breast
Flash'd the thrill'd spirit's love-devouring heat;
In that absorbing sigh perchance more blest
Than vulgar minds may be with all they seek possest.

LXXX

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,
Or friends by him self-banish'd; for his mind
Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose,
For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind
'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.
But he was phrensied, — wherefore, who may know?
Since cause might be which skill could never find;
But he was phrensied by disease or woe
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show.

LXXXI

For then he was inspired, and from him came,
As from the Pythian's mystic cave of yore,
Those oracles which set the world in flame,
Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no more:
Did he not this for France, which lay before
Bow'd to the inborn tyranny of years?

Broken and trembling to the yoke she bore,
Till by the voice of him and his compeers
Roused up to too much wrath, which follows o'ergrown fears?

LXXXII

They made themselves a fearful monument!
The wreck of old opinions, things which grew,
Breathed from the birth of time: the veil they rent,
And what behind it lay, all earth shall view.
But good with ill they also overthrew,
Leaving but ruins, wherewith to rebuild
Upon the same foundation, and renew
Dungeons and thrones, which the same hour re-fill'd
As heretofore because ambition was self-will'd.

LXXXIII

But this will not endure, nor be endured;
Mankind have felt their strength, and made it felt!
They might have used it better, but, allured
By their new vigour, sternly have they dealt
On one another; pity ceased to melt
With her once natural charities. But they,
Who in oppression's darkness caved had dwelt,
They were not eagles, nourish'd with the day;
What marvel then, at times, if they mistook their prey?

LXXXIV

What deep wounds ever closed without a scar?
The heart's bleed longest, and but heal to wear
That which disfigures it; and they who war
With their own hopes and have been vanquish'd, bear
Silence, but not submission. In his lair
Fix'd Passion holds his breath, until the hour
Which shall atone for years; none need despair:
It came, it cometh, and will come,—the power
To punish or forgive—in *one* we shall be slower.

LXXXV

Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,
With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
Which warns me with its stillness to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction; once I loved
Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
Sounds sweet as if a Sister's voice reproved,
That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved.

LXXXVI

It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
Mellow'd and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
Save darken'd Jura, whose capt heights appear
Precipitously steep; and drawing near,
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more;—

LXXXVII

He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life an infancy, and sings his fill;—
At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
But that is fancy, for the starlight dews
All silently their tears of love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

LXXXVIII

Ye stars, which are the poetry of heaven!
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires, — 't is to be forgiven,
That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a star.

LXXXIX

All heaven and earth are still — though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep: —
All heaven and earth are still. From the high host
Of stars to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,
All is concentred in a life intense,
Where not a beam nor air nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

XC

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude where we are *least* alone;
A truth, which through our being then doth melt
And purifies from self: it is a tone,
The soul and source of music, which makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty; —'t would disarm
The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm.

XCI

Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places and the peak
Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak
Uprear'd of human hands. Come, and compare
Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air,
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy pray'r!

XCII

The sky is changed! — and such a change! Oh night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps who call to her aloud!

XCIII

And this is in the night: — Most glorious night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 't is black, — and now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

XCIV

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between
Heights which appear as lovers who have parted
In hate, whose mining depths so intervene
That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted!
Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted,
Love was the very root of the fond rage

Which blighted their life's bloom and then departed —
Itself expired, but leaving them an age
Of years all winters, war within themselves to wage: —

XCV

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,
The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand:
For here, not one, but many, make their play,
And fling their thunder-bolts from hand to hand,
Flashing and cast around. Of all the band,
The brightest through these parted hills hath fork'd
His lightnings, as if he did understand,
That in such gaps as desolation work'd,
There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurk'd.

XCVI

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings! ye,
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul
To make these felt and feeling, well may be
Things that have made me watchful; the far roll
Of your departing voices, is the knoll
Of what in me is sleepless, — if I rest.
But where of ye, oh tempests, is the goal?
Are ye like those within the human breast,
Or do ye find at length, like eagles, some high nest?

XCVII

Could I embody and unbosom now
That which is most within me, — could I wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,
All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
Bear, know, feel and yet breathe — into *one* word,
And that one word were Lightning, I would speak;
But as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

XCVIII

The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
With breath all incense and with cheek all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
And living as if earth contain'd no tomb, —
And glowing into day. We may resume
The march of our existence; and thus I,
Still on thy shores, fair Leman! may find room
And food for meditation, nor pass by
Much that may give us pause if ponder'd fittingly.

XCIX

Clarens, sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep Love!
Thine air is the young breath of passionate thought,
Thy trees take root in Love; the snows above,
The very Glaciers have his colours caught,
And sunset into rose-hues sees them wrought
By rays which sleep there lovingly: the rocks,
The permanent crags, tell here of Love, who sought
In them a refuge from the worldly shocks,
Which stir and sting the soul with hope that woos, then mocks.

C

Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are trod, —
Undying Love's, who here ascends a throne
To which the steps are mountains; where the god
Is a pervading life and light, — so shown
Not on those summits solely, nor alone
In the still cave and forest; o'er the flower
His eye is sparkling and his breath hath blown,
His soft and summer breath, whose tender power
Passes the strength of storms in their most desolate hour.

CI

All things are here of *him*; from the black pines
Which are his shade on high, and the loud roar
Of torrents where he listeneth, to the vines
Which slope his green path downward to the shore,
Where the bow'd waters meet him, and adore,
Kissing his feet with murmurs; and the wood,
The covert of old trees with trunks all hoar,
But light leaves, young as joy, stands where it stood,
Offering to him and his a populous solitude, —

CII

A populous solitude of bees and birds, 950
And fairy-form'd and many-colour'd things,
Who worship him with notes more sweet than words,
And innocently open their glad wings,
Fearless and full of life: the gush of springs,
And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend
Of stirring branches, and the bud which brings
The swiftest thought of beauty, here extend,
Mingling, and made by Love, unto one mighty end.

CIII

He who hath loved not, here would learn that lore,
And make his heart a spirit; he who knows 960
That tender mystery, will love the more,
For this is Love's recess, where vain men's woes
And the world's waste have driven him far from those,
For 't is his nature to advance or die;
He stands not still, but or decays or grows
Into a boundless blessing, which may vie
With the immortal lights in its eternity!

CIV

'T was not for fiction chose Rousseau this spot,
Peopling it with affections; but he found
It was the scene which passion must allot
To the mind's purified beings; 't was the ground 971
Where early Love his Psyche's zone unbound,
And hallow'd it with loveliness. 'T is lone,
And wonderful, and deep, and hath a sound,
And sense, and sight of sweetness; here the Rhone
Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have rear'd a throne.

CV

Lausanne and Ferney, ye have been the abodes
Of names which unto you bequeath'd a name;
Mortals, who sought and found, by dangerous roads,
A path to perpetuity of fame: 980
They were gigantic minds, and their steep aim
Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
Thoughts which should call down thunder and the flame
Of Heaven, again assail'd, if Heaven the while
On man and man's research could deign do more than smile.

CVI

The one was fire and fickleness, a child,
Most mutable in wishes, but in mind
A wit as various, — gay, grave, sage, or wild, —
Historian, bard, philosopher, combined.
He multiplied himself among mankind,
The Proteus of their talents; but his own
Breathed most in ridicule, — which, as the wind, 992
Blew where it listed, laying all things prone, —
Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake a throne.

CVII

The other, deep and slow, exhausting thought,
And hiving wisdom with each studious year,
In meditation dwelt, with learning wrought,
And shaped his weapon with an edge severe,

Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer;
The lord of irony, — that master-spell,
Which stung his foes to wrath which grew from fear,
And doom'd him to the zealot's ready Hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well.

CVIII

Yet, peace be with their ashes for by them,
If merited, the penalty is paid;
It is not ours to judge, far less condemn;
The hour must come when such things shall be made
Known unto all, — or hope and dread allay'd
By slumber, on one pillow, — in the dust,
Which, thus much we are sure, must lie decay'd;
And when it shall revive, as is our trust,
T will be to be forgiven, or suffer what is just.

CIX

But let me quit man's works again to read
His Maker's, spread around me, and suspend
This page, which from my reveries I feed
Until it seems prolonging without end.
The clouds above me to the white Alps tend,
And I must pierce them, and survey whate'er
May be permitted, as my steps I bend
To their most great and growing region, where
The earth to her embrace compels the powers of air.

CX

Italia! too, Italia! looking on thee,
Full flashes on the soul the light of ages,
Since the fierce Carthaginian almost won thee,
To the last halo of the chiefs and sages
Who glorify thy consecrated pages;
Thou wert the throne and grave of empires; still
The fount, at which the panting mind assuages
Her thirst of knowledge, quaffing there her fill,
Flows from the eternal source of Rome's imperial hill.

CXI

Thus far have I proceeded in a theme
Renew'd with no kind auspices: — to feel
We are not what we have been, and to deem
We are not what we should be, and to steel
The heart against itself; and to conceal,
With a proud caution, love, or hate, or aught, —
Passion or feeling, purpose, grief, or zeal, —
Which is the tyrant spirit of our thought,
Is a stern task of soul; — no matter — it is taught.

CXII

And for these words, thus woven into song,
It may be that they are a harmless wile, —
The colouring of the scenes which fleet along,
Which I would seize, in passing, to beguile
My breast, or that of others, for a while.
Fame is the thirst of youth, — but I am not
So young as to regard men's frown or smile
As loss or guerdon of a glorious lot;
I stood and stand alone, — remember'd or forgot.

CXIII

I have not loved the world, nor the world me;
I have not flatter'd its rank breath, nor bow'd
To its idolatries a patient knee,
Nor coin'd my cheek to smiles, nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo; in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such: I stood
Among them, but not of them; in a shroud
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,
Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself subdued.

CXIV

I have not loved the world, nor the world me, —
But let us part fair foes; I do believe,
Though I have found them not, that there may be
Words which are things, hopes which will not deceive,
And virtues which are merciful nor weave
Snares for the failing: I would also deem
O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve;
That two, or one, are almost what they seem,
That goodness is no name and happiness no dream.

CXV

My daughter! with thy name this song begun —
My daughter! with thy name thus much shall end —
I see thee not, I hear thee not, but none
Can be so wrapt in thee; thou art the friend
To whom the shadows of far years extend:
Albeit my brow thou never shouldst behold,
My voice shall with thy future visions blend,
And reach into thy heart, — when mine is cold, —
A token and a tone even from thy father's mould.

CXVI

To aid thy mind's development, to watch
Thy dawn of little joys, to sit and see
Almost thy very growth, to view thee catch
Knowledge of objects, wonders yet to thee!
To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee,
And print on thy soft cheek a parent's kiss, —
This, it should seem, was not reserved for me;
Yet this was in my nature: — as it is,
I know not what is there, yet something like to this.

CXVII

Yet, though dull Hate as duty should be taught,
I know that thou wilt love me; though my name
Should be shut from thee, as a spell still fraught
With desolation, and a broken claim;
Though the grave closed between us, — 't were the same,
I know that thou wilt love me; though to drain
My blood from out thy being were an aim
And an attainment, all would be in vain, —
Still thou wouldst love me, still that more than life retain.

CXVIII

The child of love, though born in bitterness
And nurtured in convulsion, — of thy sire
These were the elements, and thine no less.
As yet such are around thee, but thy fire
Shall be more temper'd and thy hope far higher.
Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! O'er the sea,
And from the mountains where I now respire,
Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee,
As, with a sigh, I deem thou mightst have been to me!

CANTO THE FOURTH

Visto ho Toscana, Lombardia, Romagna,
Quel Monte che divide, e quel che serra
Italia, e un mare e l' altro, che la bagna.
Ariosto, *Satira* iii.

Venice, *January* 2, 1818.

TO JOHN HOBHOUSE, ESQ., A. M., F. R. S., &c

My dear Hobhouse, —

After an interval of eight years between the composition of the first and last cantos of *Childe Harold*, the conclusion of the poem is about to be submitted to the public. In parting with so old a friend, it is not extraordinary that I should recur to one still older and better, — to one who has beheld the birth and death of the other, and to whom I am far more indebted for the social advantages of an enlightened friendship, than — though not ungrateful — I can, or could be, to *Childe Harold*, for any public favour reflected through the poem on the poet, — to one, whom I have known long, and accompanied far, whom I have found wakeful over my sickness and kind in my sorrow, glad in my prosperity and firm in my adversity, true in counsel and trusty in peril, — to a friend often tried and never found wanting; — to yourself.

In so doing, I recur from fiction to truth; and in dedicating to you, in its complete or at least concluded state, a poetical work which is the longest, the most thoughtful and comprehensive of my compositions, I wish to do honour to myself by the record of many years' intimacy with a man of learning, of talent, of steadiness, and of honour. It is not for minds like ours to give or to receive flattery; yet the praises of sincerity have ever been permitted to the voice of friendship; and it is not for you, nor even for others, but to relieve a heart which has not elsewhere, or lately, been so much accustomed to the encounter of good-will as to withstand the shock firmly, that I thus attempt to commemorate your good qualities, or rather the advantages which I have derived from their exertion. Even the recurrence of the date of this letter, the anniversary of the most unfortunate day of my past existence, but which cannot poison my future while I retain the resource of your friendship and of my own faculties, will henceforth have a more agreeable recollection for both, inasmuch as it will remind us of this my attempt to thank you for an indefatigable regard, such as few men have experienced, and no one could experience without thinking better of his species and of himself.

It has been our fortune to traverse together, at various periods, the countries of chivalry, history, and fable — Spain, Greece, Asia Minor, and Italy; and what Athens and Constantinople were to us a few years ago, Venice and Rome have been more recently. The poem also, or the pilgrim, or both, have accompanied me from first to last; and perhaps it may be a pardonable vanity which induces me to reflect with complacency on a composition which in some degree connects me with the spot where it was produced, and the objects it would fain describe; and however unworthy it may be deemed of those magical and memorable abodes, however short it may fall of our distant conceptions and immediate impressions, yet as a mark of respect for what is venerable and of feeling for what is glorious, it has been to me a source of pleasure in the production, and I part with it with a kind of regret which I hardly suspected that events could have left me for imaginary objects.

With regard to the conduct of the last canto, there will be found less of the pilgrim than in any of the preceding, and that little slightly, if at all, separated from the author speaking in his own person. The fact is, that I had become weary of drawing a line which every one seemed determined not to perceive. Like the Chinese in Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*, whom nobody would believe to be a Chinese, it was in vain that I asserted, and imagined that I had drawn, a distinction between the author and the pilgrim; and the very anxiety to preserve this difference, and disappointment at finding it unavailing, so far crushed my efforts in the composition, that I determined to abandon it altogether — and have done so. The opinions which have been, or may be, formed on that subject, are *now* a matter of indifference; the work is to depend on itself, and not on the writer; and the author, who has no resources in his own mind beyond the reputation, transient or permanent, which is to arise from his literary efforts, deserves the fate of authors.

In the course of the following canto it was my intention, either in the text or in the notes, to have touched upon the present state of Italian literature, and perhaps of manners. But the text, within the limits I proposed, I soon found hardly sufficient for the labyrinth of external objects, and the consequent reflections; and for the whole of the notes, excepting a few of the shortest, I am indebted to yourself, and these were necessarily limited to the elucidation of the text.

It is also a delicate, and no very grateful task, to dissert upon the literature and manners of a nation so dissimilar; and requires an attention and impartiality which would induce us — though perhaps no inattentive observers, nor ignorant of the language or customs of the people amongst whom we have recently abode — to distrust, or at least defer our judgment, and more narrowly examine our information. The state of literary, as well as political party, appears to run, or to *have* run, so high, that for a stranger to steer impartially between them is next to impossible. It may be enough, then, at least for my purpose, to quote from their own beautiful language — 'Mi pare che in un paese tutto poetico, che vanta la lingua la più nobile ed insieme la più dolce, tutte tutte le vie diverse si possono tentare, e che sinche la patria di Alfieri e di Monti non ha perduto l' antico valore, in tutte essa dovrebbe essere la prima.' Italy has great names still: Canova, Monti, Ugo, Foscolo, Pindemonte, Visconti, Morelli, Cicognara, Albrizzi, Mezzofanti, Mai, Mustoxidi, Aglietti, and Vacca, will secure to the present generation an honourable place in most of the departments of Art, Science, and Belles Lettres, and in some the very highest; Europe — the World — has but one Canova.

It has been somewhere said by Alfieri, that 'La pianta uomo nasce più robusta in Italia che in qualunque altra terra — e che gli stessi atroci delitti che vi si commettono ne sono una prova.' Without subscribing to the latter part of his proposition, a dangerous doctrine, the truth of which may be disputed on better grounds, namely, that the Italians are in no respect more ferocious than their neighbours, that man must be wilfully blind, or ignorantly heedless, who is not struck with the extraordinary capacity of this people, or, if such a word be admissible, their *capabilities*, the facility of their acquisitions, the rapidity of their conceptions, the fire of their genius, their sense of beauty, and, amidst all the disadvantages of repeated revolutions, the desolation of battles, and the despair of ages, their still unquenched 'longing after immortality,' — the immortality of independence. And when we ourselves, in riding round the walls of Rome, heard the simple lament of the labourers' chorus, 'Roma! Roma! Roma! Roma non è più come era prima,' it was difficult not to contrast this melancholy dirge with the bacchanal roar of the songs of exultation still yelled from the London taverns, over the carnage of Mont St. Jean, and the betrayal of Genoa, of Italy, of France, and of the world, by men whose conduct you yourself have exposed in a work worthy of the better days of our history. For me, —

> 'Non movero mai corda
> Ove la turba di sue ciance assorda.'

What Italy has gained by the late transfer of nations, it were useless for Englishmen to enquire, till it becomes ascertained that England has acquired something more than a permanent army and a suspended Habeas Corpus: it is enough for them to look at home. For what they have done abroad, and especially in the South, 'Verily they *will have* their reward,' and at no very distant period.

Wishing you, my dear Hobhouse, a safe and agreeable return to that country whose real welfare can be dearer to none than to yourself, I dedicate to you this poem in its completed state; and repeat once more how truly I am ever,

Your obliged
And affectionate friend,
BYRON.

I

I STOOD in Venice on the Bridge of Sighs,
A palace and a prison on each hand;
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Look'd to the wingèd Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles!

II

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters and their powers.
And such she was; — her daughters had their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling showers:
In purple was she robed, and of her feast
Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increased.

III

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless gondolier;
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And music meets not always now the ear;
Those days are gone, but Beauty still is here;
States fall, arts fade, but Nature doth not die,
Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
The pleasant place of all festivity,
The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!

IV

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
Above the dogeless city's vanish'd sway:
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor
And Pierre can not be swept or worn away,
The keystones of the arch! — though all were o'er,
For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

V

The beings of the mind are not of clay;
Essentially immortal, they create
And multiply in us a brighter ray

And more beloved existence. That which Fate
Prohibits to dull life in this our state
Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied,
First exiles, then replaces what we hate;
Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.

VI

Such is the refuge of our youth and age,
The first from Hope, the last from Vacancy;
And this worn feeling peoples many a page,
And, may be, that which grows beneath mine eye.
Yet there are things whose strong reality
Outshines our fairy-land; in shape and hues
More beautiful than our fantastic sky,
And the strange constellations which the Muse
O'er her wild universe is skilful to diffuse:

VII

I saw or dream'd of such, — but let them go, —
They came like truth, and disappear'd like dreams;
And whatsoe'er they were — are now but so.
I could replace them if I would; still teems
My mind with many a form which aptly seems
Such as I sought for, and at moments found:
Let these too go, for waking Reason deems
Such over-weening phantasies unsound,
And other voices speak and other sights surround.

VIII

I 've taught me other tongues, and in strange eyes
Have made me not a stranger — to the mind
Which is itself, no changes bring surprise;
Nor is it harsh to make, nor hard to find
A country with — ay, or without mankind;
Yet was I born where men are proud to be,
Not without cause; and should I leave behind
The inviolate island of the sage and free,
And seek me out a home by a remoter sea,

IX

Perhaps I loved it well; and should I lay
My ashes in a soil which is not mine,
My spirit shall resume it — if we may
Unbodied choose a sanctuary. I twine
My hopes of being remember'd in my line
With my land's language: if too fond and far
These aspirations in their scope incline, —
If my fame should be, as my fortunes are,
Of hasty growth and blight, and dull Oblivion bar

X

My name from out the temple where the dead
Are honour'd by the nations — let it be,
And light the laurels on a loftier head!
And be the Spartan's epitaph on me,
'Sparta hath many a worthier son than he.'
Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor need;
The thorns which I have reap'd are of the tree
I planted, — they have torn me — and I bleed:
I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed.

XI

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord;
And annual marriage now no more renew'd,
The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,
Neglected garment of her widowhood!
St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood
Stand, but in mockery of his wither'd power,
Over the proud Place where an Emperor sued,
And monarchs gazed and envied in the hour
When Venice was a queen with an unequall'd dower.

XII

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns —
An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt;
Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains
Clank over sceptred cities; nations melt
From power's high pinnacle, when they have felt
The sunshine for a while, and downward go
Like lauwine loosen'd from the mountain's belt; —
Oh, for one hour of blind old Dandolo,
Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's conquering foe!

XIII

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,
Their gilded collars glittering in the sun;
But is not Doria's menace come to pass?
Are they not *bridled?* — Venice, lost and won,
Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,
Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose!
Better be whelm'd beneath the waves, and shun,
Even in destruction's depth, her foreign foes,
From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.

XIV

In youth she was all glory, a new Tyre,
Her very by-word sprung from victory,
The 'Planter of the Lion,' which through fire
And blood she bore o'er subject earth and sea;
Though making many slaves, herself still free,
And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite; —
Witness Troy's rival, Candia! Vouch it, ye
Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's fight!
For ye are names no time nor tyranny can blight.

XV

Statues of glass — all shiver'd — the long file
Of her dead Doges are declined to dust;
But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile
Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust;
Their sceptre broken, and their sword in rust,
Have yielded to the stranger: empty halls,
Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must
Too oft remind her who and what enthralls,
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls.

XVI

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,
And fetter'd thousands bore the yoke of war,
Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,
Her voice their only ransom from afar:
See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the car
Of the o'ermaster'd victor stops, the reins
Fall from his hands — his idle scimitar
Starts from its belt — he rends his captive's chains,
And bids him thank the bard for freedom and his strains.

XVII

Thus, Venice, if no stronger claim were thine,
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,
Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot
Which ties thee to thy tyrants; and thy lot
Is shameful to the nations, — most of all,
Albion, to thee: the Ocean queen should not
Abandon Ocean's children; in the fall
Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.

XVIII

I loved her from my boyhood; she to me
Was as a fairy city of the heart,

Rising like water-columns from the sea,
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart:
And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakspeare's art,
Had stamp'd her image in me; and even so,
Although I found her thus, we did not part,
Perchance even dearer in her day of woe
Than when she was a boast, a marvel, and a show.

XIX

I can repeople with the past — and of
The present there is still for eye and thought,
And meditation chasten'd down, enough,
And more, it may be, than I hoped or sought;
And of the happiest moments which were wrought
Within the web of my existence, some
From thee, fair Venice, have their colours caught:
There are some feelings Time cannot benumb,
Nor Torture shake, or mine would now be cold and dumb.

XX

But from their nature will the tannen grow
Loftiest on loftiest and least shelter'd rocks,
Rooted in barrenness, where nought below
Of soil supports them 'gainst the Alpine shocks
Of eddying storms; yet springs the trunk, and mocks
The howling tempest, till its height and frame
Are worthy of the mountains from whose blocks
Of bleak, gray granite into life it came,
And grew a giant tree; — the mind may grow the same.

XXI

Existence may be borne, and the deep root
Of life and sufferance make its firm abode
In bare and desolated bosoms: mute
The camel labours with the heaviest load,
And the wolf dies in silence, — not bestow'd
In vain should such example be; if they,
Things of ignoble or of savage mood,
Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay
May temper it to bear, — it is but for a day.

XXII

All suffering doth destroy, or is destroy'd
Even by the sufferer; and, in each event,
Ends: — Some, with hope replenish'd and rebuoy'd,
Return to whence they came — with like intent,
And weave their web again; some, bow'd and bent,
Wax gray and ghastly, withering ere their time,
And perish with the reed on which they leant;
Some seek devotion, toil, war, good or crime,
According as their souls were form'd to sink or climb.

XXIII

But ever and anon of griefs subdued
There comes a token like a scorpion's sting,
Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued;
And slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside for ever: it may be a sound, —
A tone of music, summer's eve, or spring,
A flower, the wind, the ocean, — which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound;

XXIV

And how and why we know not, nor can trace
Home to its cloud this lightning of the mind,
But feel the shock renew'd, nor can efface
The blight and blackening which it leaves behind,
Which out of things familiar, undesign'd,
When least we deem of such, calls up to view
The spectres whom no exorcism can bind,

The cold — the changed — perchance the dead — anew,
The mourn'd, the loved, the lost — too many ! — yet how few !

XXV

But my soul wanders; I demand it back
To meditate amongst decay, and stand
A ruin amidst ruins; there to track
Fall'n states and buried greatness, o'er a land
Which *was* the mightiest in its old command,
And *is* the loveliest, and must ever be
The master-mould of Nature's heavenly hand,
Wherein were cast the heroic and the free,
The beautiful, the brave — the lords of earth and sea,

XXVI

The commonwealth of kings, the men of Rome !
And even since, and now, fair Italy,
Thou art the garden of the world, the home
Of all Art yields, and Nature can decree;
Even in thy desert, what is like to thee ?
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes' fertility;
Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced.

XXVII

The moon is up, and yet it is not night —
Sunset divides the sky with her, a sea
Of glory streams along the Alpine height
Of blue Friuli's mountains; Heaven is free
From clouds, but of all colours seems to be
Melted to one vast Iris of the West,
Where the Day joins the past Eternity;
While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest
Floats through the azure air, an island of the blest !

XXVIII

A single star is at her side, and reigns
With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but still
Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and remains
Roll'd o'er the peak of the far Rhætian hill,
As Day and Night contending were, until
Nature reclaim'd her order: gently flows
The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil
The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
Which streams upon her stream, and glass'd within it glows,

XXIX

Fill'd with the face of heaven, which from afar
Comes down upon the waters; all its hues,
From the rich sunset to the rising star,
Their magical variety diffuse.
And now they change; a paler shadow strews
Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting day
Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away,
The last still loveliest, till — 't is gone — and all is gray.

XXX

There is a tomb in Arqua; — rear'd in air,
Pillar'd in their sarcophagus, repose
The bones of Laura's lover: here repair
Many familiar with his well-sung woes,
The pilgrims of his genius. He arose
To raise a language, and his land reclaim
From the dull yoke of her barbaric foes;
Watering the tree which bears his lady's name
With his melodious tears, he gave himself to fame.

XXXI

They keep his dust in Arqua where he died,
The mountain-village where his latter days
Went down the vale of years; and 't is their pride —
An honest pride, and let it be their praise —
To offer to the passing stranger's gaze
His mansion and his sepulchre; both plain
And venerably simple, such as raise
A feeling more accordant with his strain
Than if a pyramid form'd his monumental fane.

XXXII

And the soft quiet hamlet where he dwelt
Is one of that complexion which seems made
For those who their mortality have felt,
And sought a refuge from their hopes decay'd
In the deep umbrage of a green hill's shade,
Which shows a distant prospect far away
Of busy cities, now in vain display'd
For they can lure no further; and the ray
Of a bright sun can make sufficient holiday,

XXXIII

Developing the mountains, leaves, and flowers,
And shining in the brawling brook, where-by,
Clear as its current, glide the sauntering hours
With a calm languor, which, though to the eye
Idlesse it seem, hath its morality.
If from society we learn to live,
'T is solitude should teach us how to die;
It hath no flatterers; vanity can give
No hollow aid; alone — man with his God must strive:

XXXIV

Or, it may be, with demons, who impair
The strength of better thoughts, and seek their prey
In melancholy bosoms, such as were
Of moody texture from their earliest day
And loved to dwell in darkness and dismay,
Deeming themselves predestined to a doom
Which is not of the pangs that pass away;
Making the sun like blood, the earth a tomb,
The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier gloom.

XXXV

Ferrara, in thy wide and grass-grown streets,
Whose symmetry was not for solitude,
There seems as 't were a curse upon the seats
Of former sovereigns, and the antique brood
Of Este, which for many an age made good
Its strength within thy walls, and was of yore
Patron or tyrant, as the changing mood
Of petty power impell'd, of those who wore
The wreath which Dante's brow alone had worn before.

XXXVI

And Tasso is their glory and their shame:
Hark to his strain and then survey his cell!
And see how dearly earn'd Torquato's fame,
And where Alfonso bade his poet dwell.
The miserable despot could not quell
The insulted mind he sought to quench, and blend
With the surrounding maniacs, in the hell
Where he had plunged it. Glory without end
Scatter'd the clouds away, and on that name attend

XXXVII

The tears and praises of all time; while thine
Would rot in its oblivion — in the sink
Of worthless dust which from thy boasted line
Is shaken into nothing — but the link
Thou formest in his fortunes bids us think
Of thy poor malice, naming thee with scorn.
Alfonso! how thy ducal pageants shrink
From thee! if in another station born,
Scarce fit to be the slave of him thou madest to mourn: —

XXXVIII

Thou! form'd to eat, and be despised, and die,
Even as the beasts that perish, save that thou
Hadst a more splendid trough and wider sty;
He! with a glory round his furrow'd brow,
Which emanated then, and dazzles now,
In face of all his foes, the Cruscan quire,
And Boileau, whose rash envy could allow

No strain which shamed his country's creaking lyre,
That whetstone of the teeth — monotony in wire!

XXXIX

Peace to Torquato's injured shade! 't was his
In life and death to be the mark where Wrong
Aim'd with her poison'd arrows, but to miss.
Oh, victor unsurpass'd in modern song!
Each year brings forth its millions; but how long
The tide of generations shall roll on,
And not the whole combined and countless throng
Compose a mind like thine? Though all in one
Condensed their scatter'd rays, they would not form a sun.

XL

Great as thou art, yet parallel'd by those,
Thy countrymen, before thee born to shine,
The Bards of Hell and Chivalry: first rose
The Tuscan father's comedy divine;
Then, not unequal to the Florentine
The southern Scott, the minstrel who call'd forth
A new creation with his magic line,
And, like the Ariosto of the North,
Sang ladye-love and war, romance and knightly worth.

XLI

The lightning rent from Ariosto's bust
The iron crown of laurel's mimic'd leaves;
Nor was the ominous element unjust,
For the true laurel-wreath which Glory weaves
Is of the tree no bolt of thunder cleaves,
And the false semblance but disgraced his brow;
Yet still, if fondly Superstition grieves,
Know, that the lightning sanctifies below
Whate'er it strikes; — yon head is doubly sacred now.

XLII

Italia! oh, Italia! thou who hast
The fatal gift of beauty, which became
A funeral dower of present woes and past,
On thy sweet brow is sorrow plough'd by shame,
And annals graved in characters of flame.
Oh, God! that thou wert in thy nakedness
Less lovely or more powerful, and couldst claim
Thy right, and awe the robbers back, who press
To shed thy blood and drink the tears of thy distress;

XLIII

Then mightst thou more appal; or, less desired,
Be homely and be peaceful, undeplored
For thy destructive charms; then, still untired,
Would not be seen the armèd torrents pour'd
Down the deep Alps; nor would the hostile horde
Of many-nation'd spoilers from the Po
Quaff blood and water; nor the stranger's sword
Be thy sad weapon of defence, and so,
Victor or vanquish'd, thou the slave of friend or foe.

XLIV

Wandering in youth, I traced the path of him,
The Roman friend of Rome's least-mortal mind,
The friend of Tully. As my bark did skim
The bright blue waters with a fanning wind,
Came Megara before me, and behind
Ægina lay, Piræus on the right,
And Corinth on the left; I lay reclined
Along the prow, and saw all these unite
In ruin, even as he had seen the desolate sight; —

XLV

For Time hath not rebuilt them, but uprear'd
Barbaric dwellings on their shatter'd site,
Which only make more mourn'd and more endear'd
The few last rays of their far-scatter'd light

And the crush'd relics of their vanish'd might.
The Roman saw these tombs in his own age,
These sepulchres of cities which excite
Sad wonder, and his yet surviving page
The moral lesson bears, drawn from such pilgrimage.

XLVI

That page is now before me, and on mine
His country's ruin added to the mass
Of perish'd states he mourn'd in their decline,
And I in desolation. All that *was*
Of then destruction *is;* and now, alas!
Rome — Rome imperial, bows her to the storm,
In the same dust and blackness, and we pass
The skeleton of her Titanic form,
Wrecks of another world whose ashes still are warm.

XLVII

Yet, Italy! through every other land
Thy wrongs should ring, and shall, from side to side;
Mother of Arts, as once of arms; thy hand
Was then our guardian, and is still our guide;
Parent of our Religion, whom the wide
Nations have knelt to for the keys of heaven!
Europe, repentant of her parricide,
Shall yet redeem thee, and, all backward driven,
Roll the barbarian tide, and sue to be forgiven.

XLVIII

But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,
Where the Etrurian Athens claims and keeps
A softer feeling for her fairy halls.
Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps
Her corn and wine and oil, and Plenty leaps
To laughing life with her redundant horn.
Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps
Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,
And buried Learning rose, redeem'd to a new morn.

XLIX

There, too, the Goddess loves in stone, and fills
The air around with beauty. We inhale
The ambrosial aspect, which, beheld, instils
Part of its immortality; the veil
Of heaven is half undrawn; within the pale
We stand, and in that form and face behold
What mind can make when Nature's self would fail;
And to the fond idolaters of old
Envy the innate flash which such a soul could mould.

L

We gaze and turn away, and know not where,
Dazzled and drunk with beauty, till the heart
Reels with its fulness; there — for ever there —
Chain'd to the chariot of triumphal Art,
We stand as captives and would not depart.
Away! — there need no words nor terms precise,
The paltry jargon of the marble mart
Where Pedantry gulls Folly — we have eyes:
Blood, pulse, and breast confirm the Dardan Shepherd's prize.

LI

Appear'dst thou not to Paris in this guise?
Or to more deeply blest Anchises? or,
In all thy perfect goddess-ship, when lies
Before thee thy own vanquish'd Lord of War?
And gazing in thy face as toward a star,
Laid on thy lap, his eyes to thee upturn,
Feeding on thy sweet cheek; while thy lips are
With lava kisses melting while they burn,
Shower'd on his eyelids, brow, and mouth, as from an urn!

LII

Glowing and circumfused in speechless love,
Their full divinity inadequate
That feeling to express or to improve,

The gods become as mortals, and man's fate
Has moments like their brightest; but the weight
Of earth recoils upon us; — let it go!
We can recall such visions, and create,
From what has been or might be, things which grow
Into thy statue's form and look like gods below.

LIII

I leave to learnèd fingers and wise hands,
The artist and his ape, to teach and tell
How well his connoisseurship understands
The graceful bend and the voluptuous swell:
Let these describe the undescribable;
I would not their vile breath should crisp the stream
Wherein that image shall for ever dwell,
The unruffled mirror of the loveliest dream
That ever left the sky on the deep soul to beam.

LIV

In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie
Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
Even in itself an immortality,
Though there were nothing save the past, and this,
The particle of those sublimities
Which have relapsed to chaos: here repose
Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,
The starry Galileo, with his woes;
Here Machiavelli's earth return'd to whence it rose.

LV

These are four minds, which, like the elements,
Might furnish forth creation. Italy!
Time, which hath wrong'd thee with ten thousand rents
Of thine imperial garment, shall deny,
And hath denied, to every other sky
Spirits which soar from ruin: — thy decay
Is still impregnate with divinity,
Which gilds it with revivifying ray;
Such as the great of yore, Canova is to-day.

LVI

But where repose the all Etruscan three —
Dante, and Petrarch, and, scarce less than they,
The Bard of Prose, creative spirit, he
Of the Hundred Tales of love — where did they lay
Their bones, distinguish'd from our common clay
In death as life? Are they resolved to dust,
And have their country's marbles nought to say?
Could not her quarries furnish forth one bust?
Did they not to her breast their filial earth intrust?

LVII

Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar,
Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore;
Thy factions, in their worse than civil war,
Proscribed the bard whose name for evermore
Their children's children would in vain adore
With the remorse of ages; and the crown
Which Petrarch's laureate brow supremely wore,
Upon a far and foreign soil had grown,
His life, his fame, his grave, though rifled — not thine own.

LVIII

Boccaccio to his parent earth bequeath'd
His dust; and lies it not her Great among,
With many a sweet and solemn requiem breathed
O'er him who form'd the Tuscan's siren tongue?
That music in itself, whose sounds are song,
The poetry of speech? No; — even his tomb
Uptorn must bear the hyæna bigot's wrong,
No more amidst the meaner dead find room,
Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told for *whom*!

LIX

And Santa Croce wants their mighty dust,—
Yet for this want more noted, as of yore
The Cæsar's pageant, shorn of Brutus' bust,
Did but of Rome's best Son remind her more.
Happier Ravenna! on thy hoary shore,
Fortress of falling empire, honour'd sleeps
The immortal exile; Arqua, too, her store
Of tuneful relics proudly claims and keeps,
While Florence vainly begs her banish'd dead, and weeps.

LX

What is her pyramid of precious stones,
Of porphyry, jasper, agate, and all hues
Of gem and marble, to encrust the bones
Of merchant-dukes? The momentary dews
Which, sparkling to the twilight stars, infuse
Freshness in the green turf that wraps the dead,
Whose names are mausoleums of the Muse,
Are gently prest with far more reverent tread
Than ever paced the slab which paves the princely head.

LXI

There be more things to greet the heart and eyes
In Arno's dome of Art's most princely shrine,
Where Sculpture with her rainbow sister vies;
There be more marvels yet — but not for mine;
For I have been accustom'd to entwine
My thoughts with Nature rather in the fields,
Than Art in galleries: though a work divine
Calls for my spirit's homage, yet it yields
Less than it feels, because the weapon which it wields

LXII

Is of another temper, and I roam
By Thrasimene's lake, in the defiles
Fatal to Roman rashness, more at home;
For there the Carthaginian's warlike wiles
Come back before me, as his skill beguiles
The host between the mountains and the shore,
Where Courage falls in her despairing files,
And torrents, swoll'n to rivers with their gore,
Reek through the sultry plain with legions scatter'd o'er,

LXIII

Like to a forest fell'd by mountain winds;
And such the storm of battle on this day,
And such the frenzy, whose convulsion blinds
To all save carnage, that, beneath the fray,
An earthquake reel'd unheededly away!
None felt stern Nature rocking at his feet,
And yawning forth a grave for those who lay
Upon their bucklers for a winding sheet;
Such is the absorbing hate when warring nations meet!

LXIV

The Earth to them was as a rolling bark
Which bore them to Eternity; they saw
The Ocean round, but had no time to mark
The motions of their vessel; Nature's law,
In them suspended, reck'd not of the awe
Which reigns when mountains tremble, and the birds
Plunge in the clouds for refuge and withdraw
From their down-toppling nests; and bellowing herds
Stumble o'er heaving plains, and man's dread hath no words.

LXV

Far other scene is Thrasimene now;
Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain
Rent by no ravage save the gentle plough;
Her aged trees rise thick as once the slain

Lay where their roots are; but a brook hath ta'en —
A little rill of scanty stream and bed —
A name of blood from that day's sanguine rain;
And Sanguinetto tells ye where the dead
Made the earth wet and turn'd the unwilling waters red.

LXVI

But thou, Clitumnus, in thy sweetest wave
Of the most living crystal that was e'er
The haunt of river nymph, to gaze and lave
Her limbs where nothing hid them, thou dost rear
Thy grassy banks whereon the milk-white steer
Grazes, — the purest god of gentle waters,
And most serene of aspect, and most clear!
Surely that stream was unprofaned by slaughters —
A mirror and a bath for Beauty's youngest daughters!

LXVII

And on thy happy shore a Temple still,
Of small and delicate proportion, keeps,
Upon a mild declivity of hill,
Its memory of thee; beneath it sweeps
Thy current's calmness; oft from out it leaps
The finny darter with the glittering scales,
Who dwells and revels in thy glassy deeps;
While, chance, some scatter'd water-lily sails
Down where the shallower wave still tells its bubbling tales.

LXVIII

Pass not unblest the Genius of the place!
If through the air a zephyr more serene
Win to the brow, 't is his; and if ye trace
Along his margin a more eloquent green,
If on the heart the freshness of the scene
Sprinkle its coolness, and from the dry dust
Of weary life a moment lave it clean
With Nature's baptism, — 't is to him ye must
Pay orisons for this suspension of disgust.

LXIX

The roar of waters! — from the headlong height
Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice;
The fall of waters! rapid as the light
The flashing mass foams shaking the abyss;
The hell of waters! where they howl and hiss,
And boil in endless torture; while the sweat
Of their great agony, wrung out from this
Their Phlegethon, curls round the rocks of jet
That gird the gulf around, in pitiless horror set,

LXX

And mounts in spray the skies, and thence again
Returns in an unceasing shower, which round,
With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,
Is an eternal April to the ground,
Making it all one emerald: — how profound
The gulf! and how the giant element
From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,
Crushing the cliffs, which, downward worn and rent
With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms a fearful vent

LXXI

To the broad column which rolls on, and shows
More like the fountain of an infant sea
Torn from the womb of mountains by the throes
Of a new world, than only thus to be
Parent of rivers, which flow gushingly,
With many windings, through the vale: — Look back!
Lo, where it comes like an eternity,
As if to sweep down all things in its track,
Charming the eye with dread — a matchless cataract,

LXXII

Horribly beautiful! but on the verge,
From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,
An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,
Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn

Its steady dyes while all around is torn
By the distracted waters, bears serene
Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn;
Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,
Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.

LXXIII

Once more upon the woody Apennine,
The infant Alps, which — had I not before
Gazed on their mightier parents, where the pine
Sits on more shaggy summits, and where roar
The thundering lauwine — might be worshipp'd more;
But I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear
Her never-trodden snow, and seen the hoar
Glaciers of bleak Mont Blanc both far and near,
And in Chimari heard the thunder-hills of fear,

LXXIV

Th' Acroceraunian mountains of old name;
And on Parnassus seen the eagles fly
Like spirits of the spot, as 't were for fame,
For still they soar'd unutterably high:
I 've look'd on Ida with a Trojan's eye;
Athos, Olympus, Ætna, Atlas, made
These hills seem things of lesser dignity,
All, save the lone Soracte's height, display'd
Not *now* in snow, which asks the lyric Roman's aid

LXXV

For our remembrance, and from out the plain
Heaves like a long-swept wave about to break,
And on the curl hangs pausing. Not in vain
May he, who will, his recollections rake,
And quote in classic raptures, and awake
The hills with Latian echoes; I abhorr'd
Too much, to conquer for the poet's sake,
The drill'd dull lesson, forced down word by word
In my repugnant youth, with pleasure to record

LXXVI

Aught that recalls the daily drug which turn'd
My sickening memory; and, though Time hath taught
My mind to meditate what then it learn'd,
Yet such the fix'd inveteracy wrought
By the impatience of my early thought,
That, with the freshness wearing out before
My mind could relish what it might have sought,
If free to choose, I cannot now restore
Its health; but what it then detested, still abhor.

LXXVII

Then farewell, Horace; whom I hated so,
Not for thy faults, but mine; it is a curse
To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,
To comprehend, but never love thy verse,
Although no deeper Moralist rehearse
Our little life, nor Bard prescribe his art,
Nor livelier Satirist the conscience pierce,
Awakening without wounding the touch'd heart; —
Yet fare thee well — upon Soracte's ridge we part.

LXXVIII

Oh Rome, my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone mother of dead empires, and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.
What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day —
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

LXXIX

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago:
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;

The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers; — dost thou flow,
Old Tiber, through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress!

LXXX

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,
Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's pride:
She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride
Where the car climb'd the capitol; far and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site: —
Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, 'here was, or is,' where all is doubly night?

LXXXI

The double night of ages, and of her,
Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt and wrap
All round us; we but feel our way to err:
The ocean hath his chart, the stars their map,
And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap;
But Rome is as the desert where we steer
Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap
Our hands, and cry 'Eureka!' it is clear —
When but some false mirage of ruin rises near.

LXXXII

Alas, the lofty city! and alas,
The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!
Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page! — but these shall be
Her resurrection; all beside — decay.
Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was free!

LXXXIII

Oh thou, whose chariot roll'd on Fortune's wheel,
Triumphant Sylla! thou, who didst subdue
Thy country's foes ere thou wouldst pause to feel
The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap the due
Of hoarded vengeance till thine eagles flew
O'er prostrate Asia; — thou, who with thy frown
Annihilated senates — Roman, too,
With all thy vices, for thou didst lay down
With an atoning smile a more than earthly crown,

LXXXIV

The dictatorial wreath, — couldst thou divine
To what would one day dwindle that which made
Thee more than mortal? and that so supine
By aught than Romans Rome should thus be laid?
She who was named Eternal, and array'd
Her warriors but to conquer — she who veil'd
Earth with her haughty shadow, and display'd,
Until the o'er-canopied horizon fail'd,
Her rushing wings — Oh, she who was Almighty hail'd!

LXXXV

Sylla was first of victors; but our own
The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell; he
Too swept off senates while he hew'd the throne
Down to a block — immortal rebel! See
What crimes it costs to be a moment free
And famous through all ages! but beneath
His fate the moral lurks of destiny;
His day of double victory and death
Beheld him win two realms, and, happier, yield his breath.

LXXXVI

The third of the same moon whose former course
Had all but crown'd him, on the selfsame day

Deposed him gently from his throne of force,
And laid him with the earth's preceding clay.
And show'd not Fortune thus how fame and sway,
And all we deem delightful and consume
Our souls to compass through each arduous way,
Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?
Were they but so in man's, how different were his doom!

LXXXVII

And thou, dread statue, yet existent in
The austerest form of naked majesty!
Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassins' din,
At thy bathed base the bloody Cæsar lie,
Folding his robe in dying dignity,
An offering to thine altar from the queen
Of gods and men, great Nemesis! did he die,
And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye been
Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a scene?

LXXXVIII

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of Rome!
She-wolf, whose brazen-imaged dugs impart
The milk of conquest yet within the dome
Where, as a monument of antique art,
Thou standest; mother of the mighty heart,
Which the great founder suck'd from thy wild teat,
Scorch'd by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart,
And thy limbs black with lightning — dost thou yet
Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?

LXXXIX

Thou dost; but all thy foster-babes are dead —
The men of iron; and the world hath rear'd
Cities from out their sepulchres. Men bled
In imitation of the things they fear'd
And fought and conquer'd, and the same course steer'd,
At apish distance; but as yet none have,
Nor could the same supremacy have near'd,
Save one vain man, who is not in the grave,
But vanquish'd by himself, to his own slaves a slave —

XC

The fool of false dominion — and a kind
Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old
With steps unequal; for the Roman's mind
Was modell'd in a less terrestrial mould,
With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,
And an immortal instinct which redeem'd
The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,
Alcides with the distaff now he seem'd
At Cleopatra's feet, — and now himself he beam'd,

XCI

And came — and saw — and conquer'd! But the man
Who would have tamed his eagles down to flee,
Like a train'd falcon, in the Gallic van,
Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,
With a deaf heart which never seem'd to be
A listener to itself, was strangely framed;
With but one weakest weakness — vanity,
Coquettish in ambition — still he aim'd —
At what? can he avouch — or answer what he claim'd? —

XCII

And would be all or nothing — nor could wait
For the sure grave to level him; few years
Had fix'd him with the Cæsars in his fate,
On whom we tread. For *this* the conqueror rears
The arch of triumph! and for this the tears
And blood of earth flow on as they have flow'd,
An universal deluge, which appears
Without an ark for wretched man's abode.
And ebbs but to reflow! — Renew thy rainbow, God!

XCIII

What from this barren being do we reap?
Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,
Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,
And all things weigh'd in custom's falsest scale;
Opinion an omnipotence, — whose veil
Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale
Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too much light.

XCIV

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,
Proud of their trampled nature, and so die,
Bequeathing their hereditary rage
To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage
War for their chains, and rather than be free,
Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage
Within the same arena where they see
Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the same tree.

XCV

I speak not of men's creeds — they rest between
Man and his Maker — but of things allow'd,
Averr'd, and known — and daily, hourly seen —
The yoke that is upon us doubly bow'd
And the intent of tyranny avow'd,
The edict of Earth's rulers, who are grown
The apes of him who humbled once the proud
And shook them from their slumbers on the throne;
Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm had done.

XCVI

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquer'd be,
And Freedom find no champion and no child
Such as Columbia saw arise when she
Sprung forth a Pallas, arm'd and undefiled?
Or must such minds be nourish'd in the wild,
Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
On infant Washington? Has Earth no more
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

XCVII

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
And fatal have her Saturnalia been
To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime;
Because the deadly days which we have seen,
And vile Ambition, that built up between
Man and his hopes an adamantine wall,
And the base pageant last upon the scene,
Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall
Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's worst — his second fall.

XCVIII

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner, torn but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind;
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind:
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
Chopp'd by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the sap lasts, — and still the seed we find
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;
So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

XCIX

There is a stern round tower of other days,
Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone

Such as an army's baffled strength delays,
Standing with half its battlements alone,
And with two thousand years of ivy grown,
The garland of eternity, where wave
The green leaves over all by time o'erthrown;—
What was this tower of strength? within its cave
What treasure lay so lock'd, so hid? A woman's grave.

C

But who was she, the lady of the dead,
Tomb'd in a palace? Was she chaste and fair?
Worthy a king's — or more — a Roman's bed?
What race of chiefs and heroes did she bear?
What daughter of her beauties was the heir?
How lived, how loved, how died she? Was she not
So honour'd — and conspicuously there,
Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot?

CI

Was she as those who love their lords, or they
Who love the lords of others? — such have been
Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,
Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen,
Profuse of joy — or 'gainst it did she war,
Inveterate in virtue? Did she lean
To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar
Love from amongst her griefs? — for such the affections are.

CII

Perchance she died in youth: it may be, bow'd
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
That weigh'd upon her gentle dust, a cloud
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favourites — early death; yet shed
A sunset charm around her, and illume
With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

CIII

Perchance she died in age — surviving all,
Charms, kindred, children — with the silver gray
On her long tresses, which might yet recall,
It may be, still a something of the day
When they were braided, and her proud array
And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed
By Rome. — But whither would Conjecture stray?
Thus much alone we know — Metella died,
The wealthiest Roman's wife. Behold his love or pride!

CIV

I know not why, but standing thus by thee,
It seems as if I had thine inmate known,
Thou tomb! and other days come back on me
With recollected music, though the tone
Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy groan
Of dying thunder on the distant wind;
Yet could I seat me by this ivied stone
Till I had bodied forth the heated mind
Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin leaves behind;

CV

And from the planks, far shatter'd o'er the rocks,
Built me a little bark of hope, once more
To battle with the ocean and the shocks
Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless roar
Which rushes on the solitary shore
Where all lies founder'd that was ever dear.
But could I gather from the wave-worn store
Enough for my rude boat, where should I steer?
There woos no home, nor hope, nor life, save what is here.

CVI

Then let the winds howl on! their harmony
Shall henceforth be my music, and the night
The sound shall temper with the owlets' cry,
As I now hear them, in the fading light
Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site,
Answering each other on the Palatine,
With their large eyes all glistening gray and bright,
And sailing pinions. Upon such a shrine
What are our petty griefs? — let me not number mine.

CVII

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown
Matted and mass'd together, hillocks heap'd
On what were chambers, arch crush'd, column strown
In fragments, choked up vaults, and frescos steep'd
In subterranean damps where the owl peep'd,
Deeming it midnight: — Temples, baths, or halls?
Pronounce who can; for all that Learning reap'd
From her research hath been, that these are walls —
Behold the Imperial Mount! 't is thus the mighty falls.

CVIII

There is the moral of all human tales;
'T is but the same rehearsal of the past,
First Freedom and then Glory — when that fails,
Wealth, vice, corruption, — barbarism at last.
And History, with all her volumes vast,
Hath but *one* page, — 't is better written here
Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus amass'd
All treasures, all delights, that eye or ear,
Heart, soul could seek, tongue ask. — Away with words, draw near,

CIX

Admire, exult — despise — laugh, weep, — for here
There is such matter for all feeling: — Man!
Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear,
Ages and realms are crowded in this span,
This mountain, whose obliterated plan
The pyramid of empires pinnacled,
Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
Till the sun's rays with added flame were fill'd!
Where are its golden roofs? where those who dared to build?

CX

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,
Thou nameless column with the buried base!
What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow?
Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-place.
Whose arch or pillar meets me in the face,
Titus' or Trajan's? No — 't is that of Time:
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace
Scoffing; and apostolic statues climb
To crush the imperial urn whose ashes slept sublime,

CXI

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,
And looking to the stars. They had contain'd
A spirit which with these would find a home,
The last of those who o'er the whole earth reign'd,
The Roman globe, for after none sustain'd
But yielded back his conquests: he was more
Than a mere Alexander, and, unstain'd
With household blood and wine, serenely wore
His sovereign virtues — still we Trajan's name adore.

CXII

Where is the rock of Triumph, the high place
Where Rome embraced her heroes? where the steep

Tarpeian, fittest goal of Treason's race,
The promontory whence the Traitor's Leap
Cured all ambition? Did the conquerors heap
Their spoils here? Yes; and in yon field below,
A thousand years of silenced factions sleep —
The Forum, where the immortal accents glow,
And still the eloquent air breathes — burns with Cicero!

CXIII

The field of freedom, faction, fame, and blood:
Here a proud people's passions were exhaled,
From the first hour of empire in the bud
To that when further worlds to conquer fail'd;
But long before had Freedom's face been veil'd,
And Anarchy assumed her attributes;
Till every lawless soldier who assail'd
Trod on the trembling senate's slavish mutes,
Or raised the venal voice of baser prostitutes.

CXIV

Then turn we to her latest tribune's name,
From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,
Redeemer of dark centuries of shame —
The friend of Petrarch — hope of Italy —
Rienzi! last of Romans! While the tree
Of freedom's wither'd trunk puts forth a leaf,
Even for thy tomb a garland let it be —
The forum's champion, and the people's chief —
Her new-born Numa thou — with reign, alas, too brief.

CXV

Egeria, sweet creation of some heart
Which found no mortal resting-place so fair
As thine ideal breast! whate'er thou art
Or wert, — a young Aurora of the air,
The nympholepsy of some fond despair;
Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,
Who found a more than common votary there
Too much adoring; whatsoe'er thy birth,
Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly bodied forth.

CXVI

The mosses of thy fountain still are sprinkled
With thine Elysian water-drops; the face
Of thy cave-guarded spring, with years unwrinkled,
Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,
Whose green, wild margin now no more erase
Art's works; nor must the delicate waters sleep,
Prison'd in marble; bubbling from the base
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
The rill runs o'er, and round, fern, flowers, and ivy creep,

CXVII

Fantastically tangled. The green hills
Are clothed with early blossoms, through the grass
The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass;
Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes
Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;
The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes,
Kiss'd by the breath of heaven, seems colour'd by its skies.

CXVIII

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,
Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating
For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover.
The purple Midnight veil'd that mystic meeting
With her most starry canopy; and seating
Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?
This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting

Of an enamour'd Goddess, and the cell
Haunted by holy Love — the earliest oracle !

CXIX

And didst thou not, thy breast to his replying,
Blend a celestial with a human heart;
And Love, which dies as it was born, in sighing,
Share with immortal transports ? Could thine art
Make them indeed immortal, and impart
The purity of heaven to earthly joys,
Expel the venom and not blunt the dart —
The dull satiety which all destroys —
And root from out the soul the deadly weed which cloys ?

CXX

Alas ! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert; whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes,
Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,
And trees whose gums are poison; — such the plants
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants
For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants.

CXXI

Oh Love ! no habitant of earth thou art —
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee,
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart,
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be;
The mind hath made thee, as it peopled heaven,
Even with its own desiring phantasy,
And to a thought such shape and image given,
As haunts the unquench'd soul — parch'd — wearied — wrung — and riven.

CXXII

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
And fevers into false creation: — where,
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized ? —
In him alone. Can Nature show so fair ?
Where are the charms and virtues which we dare
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,
The unreach'd Paradise of our despair,
Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,
And overpowers the page where it would bloom again ?

CXXIII

Who loves, raves — 't is youth's frenzy; but the cure
Is bitterer still. As charm by charm unwinds
Which robed our idols, and we see too sure
Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out the mind's
Ideal shape of such; yet still it binds
The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-sown winds;
The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun,
Seems ever near the prize, — wealthiest when most undone.

CXXIV

We wither from our youth, we gasp away —
Sick — sick; unfound the boon — unslaked the thirst,
Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first —
But all too late, — so are we doubly curst.
Love, fame, ambition, avarice — 't is the same,
Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst —
For all are meteors with a different name,
And Death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.

CXXV

Few — none — find what they love or could have loved,
Though accident, blind contact, and the strong
Necessity of loving, have removed

Antipathies — but to recur, ere long,
Envenom'd with irrevocable wrong;
And Circumstance, that unspiritual god
And miscreator, makes and helps along
Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
Whose touch turns Hope to dust, — the dust we all have trod.

CXXVI

Our life is a false nature, 't is not in
The harmony of things, — this hard decree,
This uneradicable taint of sin,
This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree
Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew —
Disease, death, bondage — all the woes we see —
And worse, the woes we see not — which throb through
The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.

CXXVII

Yet let us ponder boldly; 't is a base
Abandonment of reason to resign
Our right of thought, our last and only place
Of refuge — this, at least, shall still be mine.
Though from our birth the faculty divine
Is chain'd and tortured — cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,
And bred in darkness, lest the truth should shine
Too brightly on the unpreparèd mind,
The beam pours in, for time and skill will couch the blind.

CXXVIII

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome, —
Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams shine
As 't were its natural torches, for divine
Should be the light which streams here, to illume
This long-explored but still exhaustless mine
Of contemplation; and the azure gloom
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

CXXIX

Hues which have words and speak to ye of heaven,
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
And shadows forth its glory. There is given
Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent,
A spirit's feeling; and where he hath leant
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power
And magic in the ruin'd battlement,
For which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp and wait till ages are its dower.

CXXX

Oh, Time! the beautifier of the dead,
Adorner of the ruin, comforter
And only healer when the heart hath bled —
Time! the corrector where our judgments err,
The test of truth, love, — sole philosopher,
For all besides are sophists, from thy thrift
Which never loses though it doth defer —
Time, the avenger! unto thee I lift
My hands and eyes and heart, and crave of thee a gift:

CXXXI

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine
And temple more divinely desolate,
Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,
Ruins of years — though few, yet full of fate: —
If thou hast ever seen me too elate,
Hear me not; but if calmly I have borne
Good, and reserved my pride against the hate
Which shall not whelm me, let me not have worn
This iron in my soul in vain — shall *they* not mourn?

CXXXII

And thou, who never yet of human wrong
Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!

Here, where the ancient paid thee homage long —
Thou, who didst call the Furies from the abyss,
And round Orestes bade them howl and hiss
For that unnatural retribution — just,
Had it but been from hands less near — in this
Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust!
Dost thou not hear my heart? — Awake! thou shalt, and must.

CXXXIII

It is not that I may not have incurr'd
For my ancestral faults or mine the wound
I bleed withal, and, had it been conferr'd
With a just weapon, it had flow'd unbound;
But now my blood shall not sink in the ground;
To thee I do devote it — *thou* shalt take
The vengeance, which shall yet be sought and found,
Which if *I* have not taken for the sake —
But let that pass — I sleep, but thou shalt yet awake.

CXXXIV

And if my voice break forth, 'tis not that now
I shrink from what is suffer'd; let him speak
Who hath beheld decline upon my brow,
Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak:
But in this page a record will I seek.
Not in the air shall these my words disperse,
Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak
The deep prophetic fulness of this verse,
And pile on human heads the mountain of my curse!

CXXXV

That curse shall be Forgiveness. Have I not —
Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it, Heaven! —
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not suffer'd things to be forgiven?
Have I not had my brain sear'd, my hear riven,
Hopes sapp'd, name blighted, Life's lif lied away?
And only not to desperation driven,
Because not altogether of such clay
As rots into the souls of those whom I survey

CXXXVI

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
Have I not seen what human things could do?
From the loud roar of foaming calumny
To the small whisper of the as paltry few,
And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with silence, would *seem* true,
And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.

CXXXVII

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain;
But there is that within me which shall tire
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;
Something unearthly which they deem not of,
Like the remember'd tone of a mute lyre,
Shall on their soften'd spirits sink, and move
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.

CXXXVIII

The seal is set. — Now welcome, thou dread power!
Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here
Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight hour
With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear;
Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene

Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear
That we become a part of what has been,
And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen.

CXXXIX

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmur'd pity or loud-roar'd applause,
As man was slaughter'd by his fellow man.
And wherefore slaughter'd? wherefore, but because
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure. — Wherefore not?
What matters where we fall to fill the maws
Of worms — on battle-plains or listed spot?
Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

CXL

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand — his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low —
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him — he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

CXLI

He heard it, but he heeded not — his eyes
Were with his heart and that was far away;
He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother — he, their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday —
All this rush'd with his blood. — Shall he expire
And unavenged? — Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

CXLII

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam;
And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
And roar'd or murmur'd like a mountain stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman millions' blame or praise
Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd,
My voice sounds much, and fall the stars' faint rays
On the arena void — seats crush'd — walls bow'd —
And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud.

CXLIII

A ruin — yet what ruin! From its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been rear'd;
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd.
Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but clear'd?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is near'd:
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all years, man, have reft away.

CXLIV

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch and gently pauses there;
When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air
The garland forest, which the gray walls wear
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head;
When the light shines serene but doth not glare,
Then in this magic circle raise the dead:
Heroes have trod this spot — 't is on their dust ye tread

CXLV

'While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;

And when Rome falls — the World.' From our own land
Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient; and these three mortal things are still
On their foundations, and unalter'd all;
Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,
The World, the same wide den — of thieves, or what ye will.

CXLVI

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime —
Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,
From Jove to Jesus — spared and blest by time;
Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods
Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and man plods
His way through thorns to ashes — glorious dome!
Shalt thou not last? Time's scythe and tyrants' rods
Shiver upon thee — sanctuary and home
Of art and piety — Pantheon! — pride of Rome!

CXLVII

Relic of nobler days and noblest arts!
Despoil'd, yet perfect, with thy circle spreads
A holiness appealing to all hearts —
To art a model; and to him who treads
Rome for the sake of ages, Glory sheds
Her light through thy sole aperture; to those
Who worship, here are altars for their beads;
And they who feel for genius may repose
Their eyes on honour'd forms whose busts around them close.

CXLVIII

There is a dungeon, in whose dim drear light
What do I gaze on? Nothing: Look again!
Two forms are slowly shadow'd on my sight —
Two insulated phantoms of the brain:
It is not so; I see them full and plain —
An old man, and a female young and fair,
Fresh as a nursing mother, in whose vein
The blood is nectar; — but what doth she there,
With her unmantled neck, and bosom white and bare?

CXLIX

Full swells the deep pure fountain of young life,
Where *on* the heart and *from* the heart we took
Our first and sweetest nurture, when the wife,
Blest into mother, in the innocent look
Or even the piping cry of lips that brook
No pain and small suspense, a joy perceives
Man knows not, when from out its cradled nook
She sees her little bud put forth its leaves —
What may the fruit be yet? — I know not, Cain was Eve's.

CL

But here youth offers to old age the food,
The milk of his own gift: — it is her sire
To whom she renders back the debt of blood
Born with her birth. No; he shall not expire
While in those warm and lovely veins the fire
Of health and holy feeling can provide
Great Nature's Nile, whose deep stream rises higher
Than Egypt's river: — from that gentle side
Drink, drink and live, old man! Heaven's realm holds no such tide.

CLI

The starry fable of the milky way
Has not thy story's purity; it is
A constellation of a sweeter ray,
And sacred Nature triumphs more in this
Reverse of her decree than in the abyss
Where sparkle distant worlds. Oh, holiest nurse!
No drop of that clear stream its way shall miss
To thy sire's heart, replenishing its source
With life, as our freed souls rejoin the universe.

CLII

Turn to the Mole which Hadrian rear'd on high,
Imperial mimic of old Egypt's piles,
Colossal copyist of deformity,
Whose travell'd phantasy from the far Nile's
Enormous model doom'd the artist's toils
To build for giants, and for his vain earth,
His shrunken ashes, raise this dome. How smiles
The gazer's eye with philosophic mirth,
To view the huge design which sprung from such a birth!

CLIII

But lo, the dome, the vast and wondrous dome
To which Diana's marvel was a cell,
Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's tomb!
I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle —
Its columns strew the wilderness, and dwell
The hyæna and the jackal in their shade;
I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs swell
Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have survey'd
Its sanctuary the while the usurping Moslem pray'd;

CLIV

But thou, of temples old or altars new,
Standest alone, with nothing like to thee —
Worthiest of God, the holy and the true.
Since Zion's desolation, when that He
Forsook his former city, what could be,
Of earthly structures, in his honour piled
Of a sublimer aspect? Majesty,
Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty, all are aisled
In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

CLV

Enter: its grandeur overwhelms thee not;
And why? it is not lessen'd; but thy mind,
Expanded by the genius of the spot,
Has grown colossal, and can only find
A fit abode wherein appear enshrined
Thy hopes of immortality; and thou
Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined,
See thy God face to face as thou dost now
His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his brow.

CLVI

Thou movest — but increasing with the advance,
Like climbing some great Alp, which still doth rise,
Deceived by its gigantic elegance;
Vastness which grows, but grows to harmonise —
All musical in its immensities;
Rich marbles, richer painting, shrines where flame
The lamps of gold, and haughty dome which vies
In air with Earth's chief structures, though their frame
Sits on the firm-set ground — and this the clouds must claim.

CLVII

Thou seest not all; but piecemeal thou must break
To separate contemplation the great whole;
And as the ocean many bays will make,
That ask the eye — so here condense thy soul
To more immediate objects, and control
Thy thoughts until thy mind hath got by heart
Its eloquent proportions, and unroll
In mighty graduations, part by part,
The glory which at once upon thee did not dart,

CLVIII

Not by its fault — but thine. Our outward sense
Is but of gradual grasp: and as it is
That what we have of feeling most intense
Outstrips our faint expression; even so this
Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice
Fools our fond gaze, and greatest of the great
Defies at first our Nature's littleness,
Till, growing with its growth, we thus dilate
Our spirits to the size of that they contemplate.

CLIX

Then pause, and be enlighten'd; there is more
In such a survey than the sating gaze

Of wonder pleased, or awe which would adore
The worship of the place, or the mere praise
Of art and its great masters, who could raise
What former time, nor skill, nor thought could plan;
The fountain of sublimity displays
Its depth, and thence may draw the mind of man
Its golden sands, and learn what great conceptions can.

CLX

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see
Laocoon's torture dignifying pain —
A father's love and mortal's agony
With an immortal's patience blending. Vain
The struggle; vain, against the coiling strain
And gripe and deepening of the dragon's grasp,
The old man's clench; the long envenom'd chain
Rivets the living links, the enormous asp
Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on gasp.

CLXI

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,
The God of life and poesy and light, —
The Sun in human limbs array'd, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
The shaft hath just been shot — the arrow bright
With an immortal's vengeance; in his eye
And nostril beautiful disdain and might
And majesty flash their full lightnings by,
Developing in that one glance the Deity.

CLXII

But in his delicate form — a dream of Love,
Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose breast
Long'd for a deathless lover from above
And madden'd in that vision — are exprest
All that ideal beauty ever bless'd
The mind with in its most unearthly mood,
When each conception was a heavenly guest —
A ray of immortality — and stood,
Starlike, around, until they gather'd to a god!

CLXIII

And if it be Prometheus stole from Heaven
The fire which we endure, it was repaid
By him to whom the energy was given
Which this poetic marble hath array'd
With an eternal glory — which, if made
By human hands, is not of human thought;
And Time himself hath hallow'd it, nor laid
One ringlet in the dust; nor hath it caught
A tinge of years, but breathes the flame with which 't was wrought.

CLXIV

But where is he, the Pilgrim of my song,
The being who upheld it through the past?
Methinks he cometh late and tarries long.
He is no more — these breathings are his last;
His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,
And he himself as nothing: — if he was
Aught but a phantasy, and could be class'd
With forms which live and suffer — let that pass —
His shadow fades away into Destruction's mass,

CLXV

Which gathers shadow, substance, life, and all
That we inherit in its mortal shroud,
And spreads the dim and universal pall
Through which all things grow phantoms, and the cloud
Between us sinks and all which ever glow'd,
Till Glory's self is twilight, and displays
A melancholy halo scarce allow'd
To hover on the verge of darkness; — rays
Sadder than saddest night, for they distract the gaze,

CLXVI

And send us prying into the abyss,
To gather what we shall be when the frame

Shall be resolved to something less than this
Its wretched essence; and to dream of fame,
And wipe the dust from off the idle name
We never more shall hear, — but never more,
Oh, happier thought! can we be made the same:
It is enough in sooth that *once* we bore
These fardels of the heart — the heart whose sweat was gore.

CLXVII

Hark! forth from the abyss a voice proceeds,
A long low distant murmur of dread sound,
Such as arises when a nation bleeds
With some deep and immedicable wound;
Through storm and darkness yawns the rending ground;
The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the chief
Seems royal still, though with her head discrown'd;
And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief
She clasps a babe to whom her breast yields no relief.

CLXVIII

Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou?
Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead?
Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low
Some less majestic, less beloved head?
In the sad midnight, while thy heart still bled,
The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,
Death hush'd that pang for ever; with thee fled
The present happiness and promised joy
Which fill'd the imperial isles so full it seem'd to cloy.

CLXIX

Peasants bring forth in safety. — Can it be,
Oh thou that wert so happy, so adored!
Those who weep not for kings shall weep for thee,
And Freedom's heart, grown heavy, cease to hoard
Her many griefs for ONE; for she had pour'd
Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head
Beheld her Iris. — Thou, too, lonely lord,
And desolate consort — vainly wert thou wed!
The husband of a year! the father of the dead!

CLXX

Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment made;
Thy bridal's fruit is ashes; in the dust
The fair-hair'd Daughter of the Isles is laid,
The love of millions! How we did intrust
Futurity to her! and, though it must
Darken above our bones, yet fondly deem'd
Our children should obey her child, and bless'd
Her and her hoped-for seed, whose promise seem'd
Like stars to shepherds' eyes: — 't was but a meteor beam'd.

CLXXI

Woe unto us, not her; for she sleeps well:
The fickle reek of popular breath, the tongue
Of hollow counsel, the false oracle,
Which from the birth of monarchy hath rung
Its knell in princely ears till the o'erstung
Nations have arm'd in madness, the strange fate
Which tumbles mightiest sovereigns, and hath flung
Against their blind omnipotence a weight
Within the opposing scale which crushes soon or late, —

CLXXII

These might have been her destiny; but no,
Our hearts deny it: and so young, so fair,
Good without effort, great without a foe;
But now a bride and mother — and now *there!*

How many ties did that stern moment tear!
From thy Sire's to his humblest subject's breast
Is link'd the electric chain of that despair,
Whose shock was as an earthquake's, and opprest
The land which loved thee so that none could love thee best.

CLXXIII

Lo, Nemi! navell'd in the woody hills
So far, that the uprooting wind which tears
The oak from his foundation, and which spills
The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears
Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares
The oval mirror of thy glassy lake;—
And, calm as cherish'd hate, its surface wears
A deep cold settled aspect nought can shake,
All coil'd into itself and round, as sleeps the snake.

CLXXIV

And near Albano's scarce divided waves
Shine from a sister valley; and afar
The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves
The Latian coast where sprung the Epic war,
'Arms and the Man,' whose re-ascending star
Rose o'er an empire: but beneath thy right
Tully reposed from Rome; and where yon bar
Of girdling mountains intercepts the sight
The Sabine farm was till'd, the weary bard's delight.

CLXXV

But I forget.—My Pilgrim's shrine is won,
And he and I must part—so let it be:
His task and mine alike are nearly done;
Yet once more let us look upon the sea;
The midland ocean breaks on him and me,
And from the Alban Mount we now behold
Our friend of youth, that ocean, which when we
Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold
Those waves, we follow'd on till the dark Euxine roll'd

CLXXVI

Upon the blue Symplegades. Long years—
Long, though not very many—since have done
Their work on both; some suffering and some tears
Have left us nearly where we had begun:
Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run;
We have had our reward, and it is here,—
That we can yet feel gladden'd by the sun,
And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as dear
As if there were no man to trouble what is clear.

CLXXVII

Oh that the Desert were my dwelling-place,
With one fair Spirit for my minister,
That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, love but only her!
Ye Elements, in whose ennobling stir
I feel myself exalted, can ye not
Accord me such a being? Do I err
In deeming such inhabit many a spot,
Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot?

CLXXVIII

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet can not all conceal.

CLXXIX

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean, roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;

Man marks the earth with ruin, his control
Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

CLXXX

His steps are not upon thy paths, thy fields
Are not a spoil for him, — thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth: — there let him lay.

CLXXXI

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee and arbiter of war, —
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar.

CLXXXII

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee —
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters wash'd them power while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts: — not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play;
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow;
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

CLXXXIII

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
Calm or convulsed — in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving; — boundless, endless, and sublime —
The image of Eternity — the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

CLXXXIV

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward. From a boy
I wanton'd with thy breakers — they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror — 't was a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane — as I do here.

CLXXXV

My task is done — my song hath ceased — my theme
Has died into an echo; it is fit
The spell should break of this protracted dream.
The torch shall be extinguish'd which hath lit
My midnight lamp — and what is writ, is writ, —

Would it were worthier! but I am not now
That which I have been — and my visions flit
Less palpably before me — and the glow
Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.

CLXXXVI

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been —
A sound which makes us linger; — yet — farewell!
Ye, who have traced the Pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye swell
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon and scallop-shell;
Farewell! with *him* alone may rest the pain,
If such there were — with *you*, the moral of his strain!

SHORTER POEMS

[It has seemed advisable to the present editor to change the order in which Byron's works have always been printed, and to bring together in one general section all the Shorter Poems. This arrangement, it is believed, will facilitate considerably the use of the volume in reference. Nor is any real offence committed against the chronological ordering of the works, desirable as that may be for obvious reasons. As these miscellaneous and occasional pieces were written in many cases while the composition of the longer poems was in process, any absolute arrangement by dates is, indeed, impossible. Here we have, in this section, a continuous and personal record in verse, so to speak, of Byron's life. The greatness and versatility of his lyrical powers are also made more apparent by the *coup d'œil* thus afforded.]

HOURS OF IDLENESS

A SERIES OF POEMS, ORIGINAL AND TRANSLATED

[The title *Hours of Idleness* is really applied to a miscellaneous collection of Byron's juvenile poems. His first book, *Fugitive Pieces*, was printed anonymously by S. and J. Ridge, of Newark, in 1806. This edition, which contained thirty-eight pieces, was soon suppressed, and only a single copy, in the possession of Mr. H. Buxton Forman, is known to exist. A second edition, containing forty-eight poems and entitled *Poems on Various Occasions*, was printed by the same firm in the next year. Again in the same year this firm published Byron's *Hours of Idleness*, with his name now attached. This volume included nineteen from the *Fugitive Pieces*, eight from the *Poems on Various Occasions*, and twelve now first printed, — thirty-nine in all. A fourth edition was issued, in 1808, by the same house, under the title *Poems Original and Translated*, containing thirty-eight pieces. The name, *Hours of Idleness*, first made famous by the review in the *Edinburgh*, has in all later editions been attached to the general collection of Byron's earlier poems.]

Virginibus puerisque canto. — HORACE, lib. iii. Ode 1.
Μήτ᾽ ἄρ με μάλ᾽ αἴνεε, μήτε τι νείκει. — HOMER, *Iliad*, x. 249.
He whistled as he went, for want of thought. — DRYDEN.

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE FREDERICK, EARL OF CARLISLE
KNIGHT OF THE GARTER, ETC., ETC.
THE SECOND EDITION OF THESE POEMS IS INSCRIBED
BY HIS OBLIGED WARD AND AFFECTIONATE KINSMAN
THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

In submitting to the public eye the following collection, I have not only to combat the difficulties that writers of verse generally encounter, but may incur the charge of presumption for obtruding myself on the world, when, without doubt, I might be, at my age, more usefully employed.

These productions are the fruits of the lighter hours of a young man who has lately completed his nineteenth year. As they bear the internal evidence of a boyish mind, this is, perhaps, unnecessary information. Some few were written during the disadvantages of illness and depression of spirits: under the former influence, *Childish Recollections*, in particular, were composed. This consideration, though it cannot excite the voice of praise, may at least arrest the arm of censure. A considerable portion of these poems has been privately printed, at the request and for the perusal of my friends. I am sensible that the partial and frequently injudicious admiration of a social circle is not the criterion by which poetical genius is to be estimated, yet, 'to do greatly' we must 'dare greatly;' and I have hazarded my reputation and feelings in publishing this volume. 'I have passed the Rubicon,' and must stand or fall by the 'cast of the die.' In the latter event, I shall submit without a murmur; for, though not without solicitude for the fate of these effusions, my expectations are by no means sanguine. It is probable that I may have dared much and done little; for, in the words of Cowper, 'it is one thing to write what may please our friends, who, because they are such, are apt to be a little biassed in our favour, and another to write what may please everybody; because they who have no connection, or even knowledge of the author, will be sure to find fault if they can.' To the truth of this, however, I do not wholly subscribe; on the contrary, I feel convinced that these trifles will not be treated with injustice. Their merit, if they possess any, will be liberally allowed; their numerous faults, on the other hand, cannot expect that favour which has been denied to others of maturer years, decided character, and far greater ability.

I have not aimed at exclusive originality, still less have I studied any particular model for imitation: some translations are given, of which many are paraphrastic. In the original pieces there may appear a casual coincidence with authors whose works I have been accustomed to read; but I have not been guilty of intentional plagiarism. To produce anything entirely new, in an age so fertile in rhyme, would be an Herculean task, as every subject has already been treated to its utmost extent. Poetry, however, is not my primary vocation; to divert the dull moments of indisposition, or the monotony of a vacant hour, urged me 'to this sin:' little can be expected from so unpromising a muse. My wreath, scanty as it must be, is all I shall derive from these productions; and I shall never attempt to replace its fading leaves, or pluck a single additional sprig from groves where I am, at best, an intruder. Though accustomed, in my younger days, to rove a careless mountaineer on the Highlands of Scotland, I have not, of late years, had the benefit of such pure air, or so elevated a residence, as might enable me to enter the lists with genuine bards, who have enjoyed both these advantages. But they derive considerable fame, and a few not less profit, from their productions; while I shall expiate my rashness as an interloper, certainly without the latter, and in all probability with a very slight share of the former.

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG LADY

COUSIN TO THE AUTHOR, AND VERY DEAR TO HIM

['My first dash into poetry was as early as 1800. It was the ebullition of a passion for my first cousin, Margaret Parker.'—*Diary*, 1821. In a note, however, he says he was fourteen when the poem was composed.]

Hush'd are the winds, and still the evening gloom,
Not e'en a zephyr wanders through the grove,
Whilst I return, to view my Margaret's tomb,
And scatter flowers on the dust I love.

Within this narrow cell reclines her clay,
That clay, where once such animation beam'd;
The King of Terrors seized her as his prey,
Not worth, nor beauty, have her life redeem'd.

Oh! could that King of Terrors pity feel,
Or Heaven reverse the dread decrees of fate!
Not here the mourner would his grief reveal,
Not here the muse her virtues would relate.

But wherefore weep? Her matchless spirit soars
Beyond where splendid shines the orb of day;
And weeping angels lead her to those bowers
Where endless pleasures virtue's deeds repay.

And shall presumptuous mortals Heaven arraign,
And, madly, godlike Providence accuse?
Ah! no, far fly from me attempts so vain;—
I 'll ne'er submission to my God refuse.

Yet is remembrance of those virtues dear,
Yet fresh the memory of that beauteous face;
Still they call forth my warm affection's tear,
Still in my heart retain their wonted place.
1802.

TO E——

[To the son of one of Byron's tenants at Newstead.]

Let Folly smile, to view the names
Of thee and me in friendship twined;
Yet Virtue will have greater claims
To love, than rank with vice combined.

And though unequal is thy fate,
Since title deck'd my higher birth!
Yet envy not this gaudy state;
Thine is the pride of modest worth.

Our souls at least congenial meet,
Nor can thy lot my rank disgrace;
Our intercourse is not less sweet,
Since worth of rank supplies the place.
November, 1802.

TO D——

[To George John, fifth Earl Delawarr.]

In thee, I fondly hoped to clasp
A friend, whom death alone could sever;
Till envy, with malignant grasp,
Detach'd thee from my breast for ever.

True, she has forced thee from my breast,
Yet in my heart thou keep'st thy seat;
There, there thine image still must rest,
Until that heart shall cease to beat.

And, when the grave restores her dead,
When life again to dust is given,
On thy dear breast I 'll lay my head—
Without thee, where would be my heaven?
February, 1803.

EPITAPH ON A FRIEND

'Αστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν ἑῷος.—Laertius.
[Quoted from Plato's epigram.]

Oh, Friend, for ever loved, for ever dear!
What fruitless tears have bathed thy honour'd bier!
What sighs re-echo'd to thy parting breath,
Whilst thou wast struggling in the pangs of death!
Could tears retard the tyrant in his course;
Could sighs avert his dart's relentless force;
Could youth and virtue claim a short delay,
Or beauty charm the spectre from his prey;
Thou still hadst lived to bless my aching sight,
Thy comrade's honour and thy friend's delight.
If yet thy gentle spirit hover nigh
The spot where now thy mouldering ashes lie,
Here wilt thou read, recorded on my heart,
A grief too deep to trust the sculptor's art.
No marble marks thy couch of lowly sleep,
But living statues there are seen to weep;
Affliction's semblance bends not o'er thy tomb,
Affliction's self deplores thy youthful doom.
What though thy sire lament his failing line,
A father's sorrows cannot equal mine!
Though none, like thee, his dying hour will cheer,
Yet other offspring soothe his anguish here:
But, who with me shall hold thy former place?
Thine image, what new friendship can efface?
Ah, none!—a father's tears will cease to flow,
Time will assuage an infant brother's woe;
To all, save one, is consolation known,
While solitary friendship sighs alone.
1803.

A FRAGMENT

When, to their airy hall, my fathers' voice
Shall call my spirit, joyful in their choice;
When, poised upon the gale, my form shall ride,
Or, dark in mist, descend the mountain's side;
Oh! may my shade behold no sculptured urns

To mark the spot where earth to earth returns!
No lengthen'd scroll, no praise-encumber'd stone;
My epitaph shall be my name alone;
If *that* with honour fail to crown my clay,
Oh may no other fame my deeds repay!
That, only *that*, shall single out the spot;
By that remember'd, or with that forgot.
1803.

ON LEAVING NEWSTEAD ABBEY

'Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days? Thou lookest from thy tower to-day: yet a few years, and the blast of the desert comes, it howls in thy empty court.'—OSSIAN.

THROUGH thy battlements, Newstead, the hollow winds whistle;
Thou, the hall of my fathers, art gone to decay;
In thy once smiling garden, the hemlock and thistle
Have choked up the rose which late bloom'd in the way.

Of the mail-cover'd Barons, who proudly to battle
Led their vassals from Europe to Palestine's plain,
The escutcheon and shield, which with every blast rattle,
Are the only sad vestiges now that remain.

No more doth old Robert, with harp-stringing numbers,
Raise a flame in the breast for the war-laurell'd wreath;
Near Askalon's towers, John of Horistan slumbers,
Unnerved is the hand of his minstrel by death.

Paul and Hubert, too, sleep in the valley of Cressy;
For the safety of Edward and England they fell:
My fathers! the tears of your country redress ye;
How you fought, how you died, still her annals can tell.

On Marston, with Rupert, 'gainst traitors contending,
Four brothers enrich'd with their blood the bleak field;
For the rights of a monarch their country defending,
Till death their attachment to royalty seal'd.

Shades of heroes, farewell! your descendant, departing
From the seat of his ancestors, bids you adieu!
Abroad, or at home, your remembrance imparting
New courage, he 'll think upon glory and you.

Though a tear dim his eye at this sad separation,
'T is nature, not fear, that excites his regret;
Far distant he goes, with the same emulation,
The fame of his fathers he ne'er can forget.

That fame, and that memory, still will he cherish;
He vows that he ne'er will disgrace your renown:
Like you will he live, or like you will he perish;
When decay'd, may he mingle his dust with your own!
1803.

LINES

WRITTEN IN 'LETTERS TO AN ITALIAN NUN AND AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN: BY J. J. ROUSSEAU: FOUNDED ON FACTS'

'AWAY, away, your flattering arts
May now betray some simpler hearts;
And you will smile at their believing,
And they shall weep at your deceiving.'

ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING, ADDRESSED TO MISS ——

DEAR, simple girl, those flattering arts,
From which thou 'dst guard frail female hearts,
Exist but in imagination,

Mere phantoms of thine own creation;
For he who views that witching grace,
That perfect form, that lovely face,
With eyes admiring, oh, believe me,
He never wishes to deceive thee!
Once in thy polish'd mirror glance,
Thou 'lt there descry that elegance,
Which from our sex demands such praises,
But envy in the other raises:
Then he who tells thee of thy beauty,
Believe me, only does his duty:
Ah! fly not from the candid youth;
It is not flattery, — 't is truth.
July, 1804.

ADRIAN'S ADDRESS TO HIS SOUL WHEN DYING

Animula! vagula, blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca —
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos?

Ah! gentle, fleeting, wav'ring sprite,
Friend and associate of this clay!
To what unknown region borne,
Wilt thou now wing thy distant flight?
No more with wonted humour gay,
But pallid, cheerless, and forlorn.
1806.

TRANSLATION FROM CATULLUS

AD LESBIAM

[Catullus's translation of the famous ode of Sappho.]

Equal to Jove that youth must be —
Greater than Jove he seems to me —
Who, free from Jealousy's alarms,
Securely views thy matchless charms.
That cheek, which ever dimpling glows,
That mouth, from whence such music flows,
To him, alike, are always known,
Reserved for him, and him alone.
Ah, Lesbia! though 't is death to me,
I cannot choose but look on thee;
But at the sight my senses fly;
I needs must gaze, but, gazing, die;
Whilst trembling with a thousand fears,
Parch'd to the throat my tongue adheres,
My pulse beats quick, my breath heaves short,
My limbs deny their slight support,
Cold dews my pallid face o'erspread,
With deadly languor droops my head,
My ears with tingling echoes ring,
And life itself is on the wing;
My eyes refuse the cheering light,
Their orbs are veil'd in starless night:
Such pangs my nature sinks beneath,
And feels a temporary death.

TRANSLATION OF THE EPITAPH ON VIRGIL AND TIBULLUS

BY DOMITIUS MARSUS

He who sublime in epic numbers roll'd,
And he who struck the softer lyre of love,
By Death's unequal hand alike controll'd,
Fit comrades in Elysian regions move.

IMITATION OF TIBULLUS

Sulpicia ad Cerinthum. — *Lib.* 4.

Cruel Cerinthus! does the fell disease
Which racks my breast your fickle bosom please?
Alas! I wish'd but to o'ercome the pain,
That I might live for love and you again:
But now I scarcely shall bewail my fate;
By death alone I can avoid your hate.

TRANSLATION FROM CATULLUS

Lugete, Veneres, Cupidinesque, etc.

Ye Cupids, droop each little head,
Nor let your wings with joy be spread,
My Lesbia's favourite bird is dead,
Whom dearer than her eyes she loved:
For he was gentle, and so true,
Obedient to her call he flew,
No fear, no wild alarm he knew,
But lightly o'er her bosom moved.

And softly fluttering here and there,
He never sought to cleave the air,
But chirup'd oft, and, free from care,
Tuned to her ear his grateful strain.
Now having pass'd the gloomy bourne
From whence he never can return,
His death and Lesbia's grief I mourn,
Who sighs, alas! but sighs in vain.

Oh! curst be thou, devouring grave!
Whose jaws eternal victims crave,
From whom no earthly power can save,
  For thou hast ta'en the bird away:
From thee my Lesbia's eyes o'erflow,
Her swollen cheeks with weeping glow;
Thou art the cause of all her woe,
  Receptacle of life's decay.

IMITATED FROM CATULLUS

TO ELLEN

[An imitation of 'Mellitos oculos tuos, Juventi.']

OH! might I kiss those eyes of fire,
A million scarce would quench desire:
Still would I steep my lips in bliss,
And dwell an age on every kiss;
Nor then my soul should sated be,
Still would I kiss and cling to thee:
Nought should my kiss from thine dissever;
Still would we kiss, and kiss for ever,
E'en though the numbers did exceed
The yellow harvest's countless seed.
To part would be a vain endeavour:
Could I desist?—ah! never—never!
  November 16, 1806.

TRANSLATION FROM HORACE

Justum et tenacem propositi virum, etc.

THE man of firm and noble soul
No factious clamours can control;
No threat'ning tyrant's darkling brow
  Can swerve him from his just intent:
Gales the warring waves which plough,
  By Auster on the billows spent,
To curb the Adriatic main,
Would awe his fix'd determined mind in vain.

Ay, and the red right arm of Jove,
Hurtling his lightnings from above,
With all his terrors there unfurl'd,
  He would, unmoved, unawed behold.
The flames of an expiring world,
  Again in crashing chaos roll'd,
In vast promiscuous ruin hurl'd,
Might light his glorious funeral pile:
Still dauntless 'midst the wreck of earth
    he'd smile.

FROM ANACREON

Θέλω λέγειν Ατρείδας, κ. τ. λ.

I WISH to tune my quivering lyre
To deeds of fame and notes of fire;
To echo, from its rising swell,
How heroes fought and nations fell,
When Atreus' sons advanced to war,
Or Tyrian Cadmus roved afar;
But still, to martial strains unknown,
My lyre recurs to love alone.
Fired with the hope of future fame,
I seek some nobler hero's name;
The dying chords are strung anew,
To war, to war, my harp is due.
With glowing strings, the epic strain
To Jove's great son I raise again;
Alcides and his glorious deeds,
Beneath whose arm the Hydra bleeds.
All, all in vain; my wayward lyre
Wakes silver notes of soft desire.
Adieu, ye chiefs renown'd in arms!
Adieu the clang of war's alarms!
To other deeds my soul is strung,
And sweeter notes shall now be sung;
My harp shall all its powers reveal,
To tell the tale my heart must feel;
Love, Love alone, my lyre shall claim,
In songs of bliss and sighs of flame.

FROM ANACREON

Μεσονυκτίοις ποθ' ὥραις, κ. τ. λ.

'T WAS now the hour when Night had
    driven
Her car half round yon sable heaven;
Boötes, only, seem'd to roll
His arctic charge around the pole;
While mortals, lost in gentle sleep,
Forgot to smile, or ceased to weep.
At this lone hour the Paphian boy,
Descending from the realms of joy,
Quick to my gate directs his course,
And knocks with all his little force.
My visions fled, alarm'd I rose,—
'What stranger breaks my blest repose?'
'Alas!' replies the wily child,
In faltering accents sweetly mild,
'A hapless infant here I roam,
Far from my dear maternal home.
Oh, shield me from the wintry blast!
The nightly storm is pouring fast.

No prowling robber lingers here.
A wandering baby who can fear?'
I heard his seeming artless tale,
I heard his sighs upon the gale:
My breast was never pity's foe,
But felt for all the baby's woe.
I drew the bar, and by the light
Young Love, the infant, met my sight;
His bow across his shoulders flung,
And thence his fatal quiver hung
(Ah! little did I think the dart
Would rankle soon within my heart).
With care I tend my weary guest,
His little fingers chill my breast;
His glossy curls, his azure wing,
Which droop with nightly showers, I wring;
His shivering limbs the embers warm;
And now reviving from the storm,
Scarce had he felt his wonted glow,
Than swift he seized his slender bow:—
'I fain would know, my gentle host,'
He cried, 'if this its strength has lost;
I fear, relax'd with midnight dews,
The strings their former aid refuse.'
With poison tipt, his arrow flies,
Deep in my tortured heart it lies;
Then loud the joyous urchin laugh'd:—
'My bow can still impel the shaft:
'T is firmly fix'd, thy sighs reveal it;
Say, courteous host, canst thou not feel it?'

FROM THE PROMETHEUS VINCTUS OF ÆSCHYLUS

Μηδάμ' ὁ πάντα νέμων, κ. τ. λ.

Great Jove, to whose almighty throne
Both gods and mortals homage pay,
Ne'er may my soul thy power disown,
Thy dread behests ne'er disobey.
Oft shall the sacred victim fall
In sea-girt Ocean's mossy hall;
My voice shall raise no impious strain
'Gainst him who rules the sky and azure main.

How different now thy joyless fate,
Since first Hesione thy bride,
When placed aloft in godlike state,
The blushing beauty by thy side,
Thou sat'st, while reverend Ocean smiled,
And mirthful strains the hours beguiled,
The Nymphs and Tritons danced around,
Nor yet thy doom was fix'd, nor Jove relentless frown'd.

Harrow, *December* 1, 1804.

TO EMMA

Since now the hour is come at last,
When you must quit your anxious lover;
Since now our dream of bliss is past,
One pang, my girl, and all is over.

Alas! that pang will be severe,
Which bids us part to meet no more;
Which tears me far from one so dear,
Departing for a distant shore.

Well! we have pass'd some happy hours,
And joy will mingle with our tears;
When thinking on these ancient towers,
The shelter of our infant years;

Where from this Gothic casement's height,
We view'd the lake, the park, the dell,
And still, though tears obstruct our sight,
We lingering look a last farewell,

O'er fields through which we used to run,
And spend the hours in childish play;
O'er shades where, when our race was done,
Reposing on my breast you lay;

Whilst I, admiring, too remiss,
Forgot to scare the hovering flies,
Yet envied every fly the kiss
It dared to give your slumbering eyes:

See still the little painted bark,
In which I row'd you o'er the lake;
See there, high waving o'er the park,
The elm I clamber'd for your sake.

These times are past — our joys are gone,
You leave me, leave this happy vale;
These scenes I must retrace alone:
Without thee what will they avail?

Who can conceive, who has not proved,
The anguish of a last embrace?
When, torn from all you fondly loved,
You bid a long adieu to peace.

This is the deepest of our woes,
For this these tears our cheeks bedew;
This is of love the final close,
Oh, God! the fondest, last adieu!

TO M. S. G.

Whene'er I view those lips of thine,
Their hue invites my fervent kiss;
Yet I forego that bliss divine,
Alas, it were unhallow'd bliss!

Whene'er I dream of that pure breast,
How could I dwell upon its snows!
Yet is the daring wish repress'd,
For that — would banish its repose.

A glance from thy soul-searching eye
Can raise with hope, depress with fear;
Yet I conceal my love — and why?
I would not force a painful tear.

I ne'er have told my love, yet thou
Hast seen my ardent flame too well;
And shall I plead my passion now,
To make thy bosom's heaven a hell?

No! for thou never canst be mine,
United by the priest's decree:
By any ties but those divine,
Mine, my beloved, thou ne'er shalt be.

Then let the secret fire consume,
Let it consume, thou shalt not know:
With joy I court a certain doom,
Rather than spread its guilty glow.

I will not ease my tortured heart,
By driving dove-eyed peace from thine;
Rather than such a sting impart,
Each thought presumptuous I resign.

Yes! yield those lips, for which I'd brave
More than I here shall dare to tell;
Thy innocence and mine to save, —
I bid thee now a last farewell.

Yes! yield that breast, to seek despair,
And hope no more thy soft embrace;
Which to obtain my soul would dare,
All, all reproach — but thy disgrace.

At least from guilt shalt thou be free,
No matron shall thy shame reprove;
Though cureless pangs may prey on me,
No martyr shalt thou be to love.

TO CAROLINE

Think'st thou I saw thy beauteous eyes,
Suffused in tears, implore to stay;
And heard unmoved thy plenteous sighs,
Which said far more than words can say?

Though keen the grief thy tears exprest,
When love and hope lay both o'erthrown;
Yet still, my girl, this bleeding breast
Throbb'd with deep sorrow as thine own.

But when our cheeks with anguish glow'd,
When thy sweet lips were join'd to mine,
The tears that from my eyelids flow'd
Were lost in those which fell from thine.

Thou couldst not feel my burning cheek,
Thy gushing tears had quench'd its flame;
And as thy tongue essay'd to speak,
In sighs alone it breathed my name.

And yet, my girl, we weep in vain,
In vain our fate in sighs deplore;
Remembrance only can remain, —
But that will make us weep the more.

Again, thou best beloved, adieu!
Ah! if thou canst, o'ercome regret;
Nor let thy mind past joys review, —
Our only hope is to forget!

1805.

TO CAROLINE

You say you love, and yet your eye
No symptom of that love conveys;
You say you love, yet know not why,
Your cheek no sign of love betrays.

Ah! did that breast with ardour glow,
With me alone it joy could know,
Or feel with me the listless woe,
Which racks my heart when far from thee.

Whene'er we meet my blushes rise,
And mantle through my purpled cheek;
But yet no blush to mine replies,
Nor e'en your eyes your love bespeak.

Your voice alone declares your flame,
And though so sweet it breathes my name,
Our passions still are not the same;
Alas! you can not love like me.

For e'en your lip seems steep'd in snow,
And though so oft it meets my kiss,
It burns with no responsive glow,
Nor melts like mine in dewy bliss.

Ah! what are words to love like *mine*,
Though utter'd by a voice like thine,
I still in murmurs must repine,
And think that love can ne'er be *true*,

Which meets me with no joyous sign,
Without a sigh which bids adieu; —
How different is my love from thine,
How keen my grief when leaving you.

Your image fills my anxious breast,
Till day declines adown the West;
And when at night I sink to rest,
In dreams your fancied form I view.

'T is then your breast, no longer cold,
With equal ardour seems to burn,
While close your arms around me fold,
Your lips my kiss with warmth return.

Ah! would these joyous moments last;
Vain Hope! the gay delusion 's past,
That voice! — ah, no, 't is but the blast
Which echoes through the neighbouring grove.

But when *awake*, your lips I seek,
And clasp enraptured all your charms,
So chill 's the pressure of your cheek,
I fold a statue in my arms.

If thus, when to my heart embraced,
No pleasure in your eyes is traced,
You may be prudent, fair, and *chaste*,
But ah! my girl, you *do not love*.

TO CAROLINE

When I hear you express an affection so warm,
Ne'er think, my beloved, that I do not believe;
For your lip would the soul of suspicion disarm,
And your eye beams a ray which can never deceive.

Yet, still, this fond bosom regrets, while adoring,
That love, like the leaf, must fall into the sear;
That age will come on, when remembrance, deploring,
Contemplates the scenes of her youth with a tear;

That the time must arrive, when, no longer retaining
Their auburn, those locks must wave thin to the breeze,
When a few silver hairs of those tresses remaining
Prove nature a prey to decay and disease.

'T is this, my beloved, which spreads gloom o'er my features,
Though I ne'er shall presume to arraign the decree,
Which God has proclaim'd as the fate of his creatures,
In the death which one day will deprive you of me.

Mistake not, sweet sceptic, the cause of emotion,
No doubt can the mind of your lover invade;
He worships each look with such faithful devotion,
A smile can enchant, or a tear can dissuade.

But as death, my beloved, soon or late shall o'ertake us,
And our breasts, which alive with such sympathy glow,
Will sleep in the grave till the blast shall awake us,
When calling the dead, in earth's bosom laid low, —

Oh! then let us drain, while we may, draughts of pleasure,
Which from passion like ours may unceasingly flow;
Let us pass round the cup of love's bliss in full measure,
And quaff the contents as our nectar below.

1805.

TO CAROLINE

Oh when shall the grave hide for ever my sorrow?
Oh when shall my soul wing her flight from this clay?
The present is hell, and the coming to-morrow
But brings, with new torture, the curse of to-day.

From my eye flows no tear, from my lips flow no curses,
I blast not the fiends who have hurl'd me from bliss;
For poor is the soul which bewailing rehearses
Its querulous grief, when in anguish like this.

Was my eye, 'stead of tears, with red fury flakes bright'ning,
Would my lips breathe a flame which no stream could assuage,
On our foes should my glance launch in vengeance its lightning,
With transport my tongue give a loose to its rage.

But now tears and curses, alike unavailing,
Would add to the souls of our tyrants delight;
Could they view us our sad separation bewailing,
Their merciless hearts would rejoice at the sight.

Yet still, though we bend with a feign'd resignation,
Life beams not for us with one ray that can cheer;
Love and hope upon earth bring no more consolation,
In the grave is our hope, for in life is our fear.

Oh! when, my adored, in the tomb will they place me,
Since, in life, love and friendship for ever are fled?
If again in the mansion of death I embrace thee,
Perhaps they will leave unmolested the dead.

1805.

STANZAS TO A LADY

WITH THE POEMS OF CAMOËNS

This votive pledge of fond esteem,
Perhaps, dear girl! for me thou 'lt prize;
It sings of Love's enchanting dream,
A theme we never can despise.

Who blames it but the envious fool,
The old and disappointed maid;
Or pupil of the prudish school,
In single sorrow doom'd to fade?

Then read, dear girl! with feeling read,
For thou wilt ne'er be one of those;
To thee in vain I shall not plead
In pity for the poet's woes.

He was in sooth a genuine bard,
His was no faint fictitious flame;
Like his, may love be thy reward,
But not thy hapless fate the same.

THE FIRST KISS OF LOVE

Α Βάρβιτος δὲ χορδαῖς
῾Ερωτα μοῦνον ἠχεῖ. — Anacreon.

Away with your fictions of flimsy romance,
Those tissues of falsehood which folly has wove!
Give me the mild beam of the soul-breathing glance,
Or the rapture which dwells on the first kiss of love.

Ye rhymers, whose bosoms with phantasy glow,
Whose pastoral passions are made for the grove;
From what blest inspiration your sonnets would flow,
Could you ever have tasted the first kiss of love!

If Apollo should e'er his assistance refuse,
Or the Nine be disposed from your service to rove,
Invoke them no more, bid adieu to the muse,
And try the effect of the first kiss of love.

I hate you, ye cold compositions of art!
Though prudes may condemn me, and bigots reprove,
I court the effusions that spring from the heart,
Which throbs with delight to the first kiss of love.

Your shepherds, your flocks, those fantastical themes,
Perhaps may amuse, yet they never can move:

Arcadia displays but a region of dreams;
What are visions like these to the first kiss of love?

Oh! cease to affirm that man, since his birth,
From Adam till now, has with wretchedness strove;
Some portion of paradise still is on earth,
And Eden revives in the first kiss of love.

When age chills the blood, when our pleasures are past —
For years fleet away with the wings of the dove —
The dearest remembrance will still be the last,
Our sweetest memorial the first kiss of love.

December 23, 1806.

ON A CHANGE OF MASTERS AT A GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOL

[In March, 1805, Dr. Drury retired from his situation of head-master at Harrow, and was succeeded by Dr. Butler. Byron, before his departure for Greece, in 1809, became reconciled with Dr. Butler.]

Where are those honours, Ida! once your own,
When Probus filled your magisterial throne?
As ancient Rome, fast falling to disgrace,
Hail'd a barbarian in her Cæsar's place,
So you, degenerate, share as hard a fate,
And seat Pomposus where your Probus sate.
Of narrow brain, yet of a narrower soul,
Pomposus holds you in his harsh control;
Pomposus, by no social virtue sway'd,
With florid jargon, and with vain parade;
With noisy nonsense, and new-fangled rules
Such as were ne'er before enforced in schools.
Mistaking pedantry for learning's laws,
He governs, sanction'd but by self-applause.
With him the same dire fate attending Rome,
Ill-fated Ida! soon must stamp your doom:
Like her o'erthrown, for ever lost to fame,
No trace of science left you, but the name.

July, 1805.

TO THE DUKE OF DORSET

Dorset! whose early steps with mine have stray'd,
Exploring every path of Ida's glade;
Whom still affection taught me to defend,
And made me less a tyrant than a friend,
Though the harsh custom of our youthful band
Bade *thee* obey, and gave *me* to command,
Thee, on whose head a few short years will shower
The gift of riches and the pride of power;
E'en now a name illustrious is thine own,
Renown'd in rank, not far beneath the throne.
Yet, Dorset, let not this seduce thy soul
To shun fair science, or evade control,
Though passive tutors, fearful to dispraise
The titled child whose future breath may raise,
View ducal errors with indulgent eyes,
And wink at faults they tremble to chastise.
When youthful parasites, who bend the knee
To wealth, their golden idol, not to thee,—
And even in simple boyhood's opening dawn
Some slaves are found to flatter and to fawn,—
When these declare, 'that pomp alone should wait
On one by birth predestined to be great;
That books were only meant for drudging fools,
That gallant spirits scorn the common rules;'
Believe them not;—they point the path to shame,
And seek to blast the honours of thy name.
Turn to the few in Ida's early throng,
Whose souls disdain not to condemn the wrong;
Or if, amidst the comrades of thy youth,
None dare to raise the sterner voice of truth,
Ask thine own heart; 't will bid thee, boy, forbear;
For *well* I know that virtue lingers there.
Yes! I have mark'd thee many a passing day,
But now new scenes invite me far away;
Yes! I have mark'd within that generous mind
A soul, if well matured, to bless mankind.

Ah! though myself, by nature haughty, wild,
Whom Indiscretion hail'd her favourite child;
Though every error stamps me for her own,
And dooms my fall, I fain would fall alone;
Though my proud heart no precept now can tame,
I love the virtues which I cannot claim.
'T is not enough, with other sons of power,
To gleam the lambent meteor of an hour;
To swell some peerage page in feeble pride,
With long-drawn names that grace no page beside;
Then share with titled crowds the common lot —
In life just gazed at, in the grave forgot;
While naught divides thee from the vulgar dead
Except the dull cold stone that hides thy head,
The mouldering 'scutcheon, or the herald's roll,
That well-emblazon'd but neglected scroll,
Where lords, unhonour'd, in the tomb may find
One spot, to leave a worthless name behind.
There sleep, unnoticed as the gloomy vaults
That veil their dust, their follies, and their faults,
A race, with old armorial lists o'erspread,
In records destined never to be read.
Fain would I view thee, with prophetic eyes,
Exalted more among the good and wise,
A glorious and a long career pursue,
As first in rank, the first in talent too:
Spurn every vice, each little meanness shun;
Not Fortune's minion, but her noblest son.
Turn to the annals of a former day;
Bright are the deeds thine earlier sires display.
One, though a courtier, lived a man of worth,
And call'd, proud boast! the British drama forth.
Another view, not less renown'd for wit;
Alike for courts, and camps, or senates fit;
Bold in the field, and favour'd by the Nine;
In every splendid part ordain'd to shine;
Far, far distinguish'd from the glittering throng,
The pride of princes, and the boast of song.
Such were thy fathers; thus preserve their name,
Not heir to titles only, but to fame.
The hour draws nigh, a few brief days will close
To me, this little scene of joys and woes;
Each knell of Time now warns me to resign
Shades where Hope, Peace, and Friendship all were mine:
Hope, that could vary like the rainbow's hue,
And gild their pinions as the moments flew;
Peace, that reflection never frown'd away,
By dreams of ill to cloud some future day;
Friendship, whose truth let childhood only tell,
Alas! they love not long, who love so well.
To these adieu! nor let me linger o'er
Scenes hail'd, as exiles hail their native shore,
Receding slowly through the dark-blue deep,
Beheld by eyes that mourn yet cannot weep.
Dorset, farewell! I will not ask one part
Of sad remembrance in so young a heart;
The coming morrow from thy youthful mind
Will sweep my name, nor leave a trace behind.
And yet, perhaps, in some maturer year,
Since chance has thrown us in the self-same sphere,
Since the same senate, nay, the same debate,
May one day claim our suffrage for the state,
We hence may meet, and pass each other by,
With faint regard, or cold and distant eye.
For me, in future, neither friend nor foe,
A stranger to thyself, thy weal or woe,
With thee no more again I hope to trace
The recollection of our early race;
No more, as once, in social hours rejoice,
Or hear, unless in crowds, thy well-known voice.
Still, if the wishes of a heart untaught
To veil those feelings which perchance it ought,
If these, — but let me cease the lengthen'd strain, —
Oh! if these wishes are not breathed in vain,
The guardian seraph who directs thy fate
Will leave thee glorious, as he found thee great.

1805.

FRAGMENT

WRITTEN SHORTLY AFTER THE MARRIAGE OF MISS CHAWORTH

[Miss Chaworth was married to John Musters, Esq., in August, 1805. Byron in his later poems often refers to his love for 'Mary' as having influenced his whole life.]

Hills of Annesley! bleak and barren,
  Where my thoughtless childhood stray'd,
How the northern tempests, warring,
  Howl above thy tufted shade!

Now no more, the hours beguiling,
  Former favourite haunts I see;
Now no more my Mary smiling
  Makes ye seem a heaven to me.
1805.

GRANTA — A MEDLEY

Ἀργυρέαις λόγχαισι μάχου καὶ πάντα κρατήσεις.

Oh! could Le Sage's demon's gift
  Be realized at my desire,
This night my trembling form he 'd lift
  To place it on St. Mary's spire.

Then would, unroof'd, old Granta's halls
  Pedantic inmates full display;
Fellows who dream on lawn or stalls,
  The price of venal votes to pay.

Then would I view each rival wight,
  Petty and Palmerston survey;
Who canvass there with all their might,
  Against the next elective day.

Lo! candidates and voters lie
  All lull'd in sleep, a goodly number:
A race renown'd for piety,
  Whose conscience won't disturb their slumber.

Lord H——, indeed, may not demur;
  Fellows are sage reflecting men:
They know preferment can occur
  But very seldom, — now and then.

They know the Chancellor has got
  Some pretty livings in disposal;
Each hopes that one may be his lot,
  And therefore smiles on his proposal.

Now from the soporific scene
  I 'll turn mine eye, as night grows later,
To view, unheeded and unseen,
  The studious sons of Alma Mater.

There, in apartments small and damp,
  The candidate for college prizes
Sits poring by the midnight lamp;
  Goes late to bed, yet early rises.

He surely well deserves to gain them,
  With all the honours of his college,
Who, striving hardly to obtain them,
  Thus seeks unprofitable knowledge:

Who sacrifices hours of rest
  To scan precisely metres Attic;
Or agitates his anxious breast
  In solving problems mathematic:

Who reads false quantities in Seale,
  Or puzzles o'er the deep triangle;
Deprived of many a wholesome meal;
  In barbarous Latin doom'd to wrangle:

Renouncing every pleasing page
  From authors of historic use;
Preferring to the letter'd sage,
  The square of the hypothenuse.

Still, harmless are these occupations,
  That hurt none but the hapless student,
Compared with other recreations
  Which bring together the imprudent,

Whose daring revels shock the sight,
  When vice and infamy combine,
When drunkenness and dice invite,
  As every sense is steep'd in wine.

Not so the methodistic crew,
  Who plans of reformation lay:
In humble attitude they sue,
  And for the sins of others pray,

Forgetting that their pride of spirit,
  Their exultation in their trial,
Detracts most largely from the merit
  Of all their boasted self-denial.

'T is morn: — from these I turn my sight.
  What scene is this which meets the eye?
A numerous crowd, array'd in white,
  Across the green in numbers fly.

Loud rings in air the chapel bell;
'T is hush'd: — what sounds are these I hear?
The organ's soft celestial swell
Rolls deeply on the list'ning ear.

To this is join'd the sacred song,
The royal minstrel's hallow'd strain;
Though he who hears the music long
Will never wish to hear again.

Our choir would scarcely be excused,
Even as a band of raw beginners;
All mercy now must be refused
To such a set of croaking sinners.

If David, when his toils were ended,
Had heard these blockheads sing before him,
To us his psalms had ne'er descended, —
In furious mood he would have tore 'em.

The luckless Israelites, when taken
By some inhuman tyrant's order,
Were ask'd to sing, by joy forsaken,
On Babylonian river's border.

Oh! had they sung in notes like these,
Inspired by stratagem or fear,
They might have set their hearts at ease,
The devil a soul had stay'd to hear.

But if I scribble longer now,
The deuce a soul will stay to read:
My pen is blunt, my ink is low;
'T is almost time to stop, indeed.

Therefore, farewell, old Granta's spires!
No more, like Cleofas, I fly;
No more thy theme my muse inspires:
The reader's tired, and so am I.

October 28, 1806.

ON A DISTANT VIEW OF THE VILLAGE AND SCHOOL OF HARROW ON THE HILL

Oh! mihi præteritos referat si Jupiter annos. — VIRGIL.

YE scenes of my childhood, whose loved recollection
Embitters the present, compared with the past;
Where science first dawn'd on the powers of reflection,
And friendships were form'd, too romantic to last;

Where fancy yet joys to retrace the resemblance
Of comrades, in friendship and mischief allied;
How welcome to me your ne'er fading remembrance,
Which rests in the bosom, though hope is denied!

Again I revisit the hills where we sported,
The streams where we swam, and the fields where we fought;
The school where, loud warn'd by the bell, we resorted,
To pore o'er the precepts by pedagogues taught.

Again I behold where for hours I have ponder'd,
As reclining, at eve, on yon tombstone I lay;
Or round the steep brow of the churchyard I wander'd,
To catch the last gleam of the sun's setting ray.

I once more view the room, with spectators surrounded,
Where, as Zanga, I trod on Alonzo o'erthrown;
While, to swell my young pride, such applauses resounded,
I fancied that Mossop himself was outshone:

Or, as Lear, I pour'd forth the deep imprecation,
By my daughters of kingdom and reason deprived;
Till, fired by loud plaudits and self-adulation,
I regarded myself as a Garrick revived.

Ye dreams of my boyhood, how much I regret you!
Unfaded your memory dwells in my breast;
Though sad and deserted, I ne'er can forget you:
Your pleasures may still be in fancy possest.

To Ida full oft may remembrance restore me,
While fate shall the shades of the future unroll!
Since darkness o'ershadows the prospect before me,
More dear is the beam of the past to my soul.

But if, through the course of the years which await me,
Some new scene of pleasure should open to view,
I will say, while with rapture the thought shall elate me,
'Oh, such were the days which my infancy knew!'
1806.

TO M——

Oh! did those eyes, instead of fire,
With bright but mild affection shine,
Though they might kindle less desire,
Love, more than mortal, would be thine.

For thou art form'd so heavenly fair,
Howe'er those orbs may wildly beam,
We must admire, but still despair;
That fatal glance forbids esteem.

When Nature stamp'd thy beauteous birth,
So much perfection in thee shone,
She fear'd that, too divine for earth,
The skies might claim thee for their own:

Therefore, to guard her dearest work,
Lest angels might dispute the prize,
She bade a secret lightning lurk
Within those once celestial eyes.

These might the boldest sylph appal,
When gleaming with meridian blaze;
Thy beauty must enrapture all;
But who can dare thine ardent gaze?

'T is said that Berenice's hair
In stars adorns the vault of heaven;
But they would ne'er permit thee there,
Thou wouldst so far outshine the seven.

For did those eyes as planets roll,
Thy sister-lights would scarce appear:
E'en suns, which systems now control,
Would twinkle dimly through their sphere.
November 7, 1806.

TO WOMAN

Woman! experience might have told me,
That all must love thee who behold thee:
Surely experience might have taught
Thy firmest promises are nought:
But, placed in all thy charms before me,
All I forget, but to adore thee.
Oh memory! thou choicest blessing
When join'd with hope, when still possessing;
But how much cursed by every lover
When hope is fled and passion's over.
Woman, that fair and fond deceiver,
How prompt are striplings to believe her!
How throbs the pulse when first we view
The eye that rolls in glossy blue,
Or sparkles black, or mildly throws
A beam from under hazel brows!
How quick we credit every oath,
And hear her plight the willing troth!
Fondly we hope 't will last for aye,
When, lo! she changes in a day.
This record will for ever stand,
'Woman, thy vows are traced in sand.'

TO M. S. G.

When I dream that you love me, you 'll surely forgive;
Extend not your anger to sleep;
For in visions alone your affection can live, —
I rise, and it leaves me to weep.

Then, Morpheus! envelope my faculties fast,
Shed o'er me your languor benign;
Should the dream of to-night but resemble the last,
What rapture celestial is mine!

They tell us that slumber, the sister of death,
Mortality's emblem is given;
To fate how I long to resign my frail breath,
If this be a foretaste of heaven!

Ah! frown not, sweet lady, unbend your soft brow,
Nor deem me too happy in this;
If I sin in my dream, I atone for it now,
Thus doom'd but to gaze upon bliss.

Though in visions, sweet lady, perhaps you may smile,
Oh, think not my penance deficient!
When dreams of your presence my slumbers beguile,
To awake will be torture sufficient.

TO MARY

ON RECEIVING HER PICTURE

[The 'Mary' of this poem is not to be confounded with the heiress of Annesley, or 'Mary' of Aberdeen.]

This faint resemblance of thy charms,
Though strong as mortal art could give,
My constant heart of fear disarms,
Revives my hopes, and bids me live.

Here I can trace the locks of gold
Which round thy snowy forehead wave,
The cheeks which sprung from beauty's mould,
The lips which made me beauty's slave.

Here I can trace — ah, no! that eye,
Whose azure floats in liquid fire,
Must all the painter's art defy,
And bid him from the task retire.

Here I behold its beauteous hue;
But where's the beam so sweetly straying,
Which gave a lustre to its blue,
Like Luna o'er the ocean playing?

Sweet copy! far more dear to me,
Lifeless, unfeeling as thou art,
Than all the living forms could be,
Save her who placed thee next my heart.

She placed it, sad, with needless fear,
Lest time might shake my wavering soul,
Unconscious that her image there
Held every sense in fast control.

Through hours, through years, through time, 't will cheer;
My hope in gloomy moments raise;
In life's last conflict 't will appear,
And meet my fond expiring gaze.

TO LESBIA

[The Lesbia of this poem is Julia Leacroft.]

Lesbia! since far from you I 've ranged,
Our souls with fond affection glow not;
You say 't is I, not you, have changed,
I 'd tell you why, — but yet I know not.

Your polish'd brow no cares have crost;
And, Lesbia! we are not much older,
Since, trembling, first my heart I lost,
Or told my love, with hope grown bolder.

Sixteen was then our utmost age,
Two years have lingering past away, love!
And now new thoughts our minds engage,
At least I feel disposed to stray, love!

'T is I that am alone to blame,
I, that am guilty of love's treason;
Since your sweet breast is still the same,
Caprice must be my only reason.

I do not, love! suspect your truth,
With jealous doubt my bosom heaves not;
Warm was the passion of my youth,
One trace of dark deceit it leaves not.

No, no, my flame was not pretended,
For, oh! I loved you most sincerely;
And — though our dream at last is ended —
My bosom still esteems you dearly.

No more we meet in yonder bowers;
Absence has made me prone to roving;
But older, firmer hearts than ours
Have found monotony in loving.

Your cheek's soft bloom is unimpair'd,
New beauties still are daily bright'ning,
Your eye for conquest beams prepared,
The forge of love's resistless lightning.

Arm'd thus, to make their bosoms bleed,
Many will throng to sigh like me, love!
More constant they may prove, indeed;
Fonder, alas! they ne'er can be, love!
[1806.]

LINES ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY

As the author was discharging his pistols in a garden, two ladies passing near the spot were alarmed by the sound of a bullet hissing near them; to one of whom the following stanzas were addressed the next morning. [The occurrence took place at Southwell, and the beautiful lady to whom the lines were addressed was Miss Houson.]

Doubtless, sweet girl! the hissing lead,
Wafting destruction o'er thy charms,
And hurtling o'er thy lovely head,
Has fill'd that breast with fond alarms.

Surely some envious demon's force,
Vex'd to behold such beauty here,
Impell'd the bullet's viewless course,
Diverted from its first career.

Yes! in that nearly fatal hour
The ball obey'd some hell-born guide;
But Heaven, with interposing power,
In pity turn'd the death aside.

Yet, as perchance one trembling tear
Upon that thrilling bosom fell;
Which I, th' unconscious cause of fear,
Extracted from its glistening cell:

Say, what dire penance can atone
For such an outrage done to thee?
Arraign'd before thy beauty's throne,
What punishment wilt thou decree?

Might I perform the judge's part,
The sentence I should scarce deplore;
It only would restore a heart
Which but belong'd to thee before.

The least atonement I can make
Is to become no longer free;
Henceforth I breathe but for thy sake,
Thou shalt be all in all to me.

But thou, perhaps, may'st now reject
Such expiation of my guilt:
Come then, some other mode elect;
Let it be death, or what thou wilt.

Choose then, relentless! and I swear
Nought shall thy dread decree prevent;
Yet hold — one little word forbear!
Let it be aught but banishment.

LOVE'S LAST ADIEU

'Αεὶ, δ' ἀεί με φεύγει. — Anacreon.

The roses of love glad the garden of life,
Though nurtured 'mid weeds dropping pestilent dew,
Till time crops the leaves with unmerciful knife,
Or prunes them for ever, in love's last adieu!

In vain with endearments we soothe the sad heart,
In vain do we vow for an age to be true;
The chance of an hour may command us to part,
Or death disunite us in love's last adieu!

Still Hope, breathing peace through the grief-swollen breast,
Will whisper, 'Our meeting we yet may renew:'
With this dream of deceit half our sorrow 's represt,
Nor taste we the poison of love's last adieu!

Oh! mark you yon pair: in the sunshine of youth
Love twined round their childhood his flow'rs as they grew;
They flourish awhile in the season of truth,
Till chill'd by the winter of love's last adieu!

Sweet lady! why thus doth a tear steal its way
Down a cheek which outrivals thy bosom in hue?
Yet why do I ask? — to distraction a prey,
Thy reason has perish'd with love's last adieu!

Oh! who is yon misanthrope, shunning mankind?
From cities to caves of the forest he flew:
There, raving, he howls his complaint to the wind;
The mountains reverberate love's last adieu!

Now hate rules a heart which in love's easy chains
Once passion's tumultuous blandishments knew:

Despair now inflames the dark tide of his veins;
He ponders in frenzy on love's last adieu!

How he envies the wretch with a soul wrapt in steel!
His pleasures are scarce, yet his troubles are few,
Who laughs at the pang that he never can feel,
And dreads not the anguish of love's last adieu!

Youth flies, life decays, even hope is o'ercast;
No more with love's former devotion we sue:
He spreads his young wing, he retires with the blast;
The shroud of affection is love's last adieu!

In this life of probation for rapture divine,
Astrea declares that some penance is due;
From him who has worshipp'd at love's gentle shrine,
The atonement is ample in love's last adieu!

Who kneels to the god, on his altar of light
Must myrtle and cypress alternately strew:
His myrtle, an emblem of purest delight;
His cypress, the garland of love's last adieu!

Even still conflicting passions shake his soul,
And bid him drain the dregs of pleasure's bowl;
But, pall'd with vice, he breaks his former chain,
And what was once his bliss appears his bane.

DAMÆTAS

[Moore applies these lines to Byron himself: E. H. Coleridge with more probability regards them as a satirical sketch of some acquaintance.]

In law an infant and in years a boy,
In mind a slave to every vicious joy;
From every sense of shame and virtue wean'd;
In lies an adept, in deceit a fiend;
Versed in hypocrisy while yet a child;
Fickle as wind, of inclinations wild;
Woman his dupe, his heedless friend a tool;
Old in the world, though scarcely broke from school;
Damætas ran through all the maze of sin,
And found the goal when others just begin.

TO MARION

[To Harriet Maltby, who was 'cold, silent and reserved' on meeting the poet.]

Marion, why that pensive brow?
What disgust to life hast thou?
Change that discontented air;
Frowns become not one so fair.
'T is not love disturbs thy rest,
Love 's a stranger to thy breast;
He in dimpling smiles appears,
Or mourns in sweetly timid tears,
Or bends the languid eyelid down,
But shuns the cold forbidding frown.
Then resume thy former fire,
Some will love, and all admire;
While that icy aspect chills us,
Nought but cool indifference thrills us.
Wouldst thou wandering hearts beguile,
Smile at least, or seem to smile.
Eyes like thine were never meant
To hide their orbs in dark restraint;
Spite of all thou fain wouldst say,
Still in truant beams they play.
Thy lips — but here my modest Muse
Her impulse chaste must needs refuse:
She blushes, curt'sies, frowns — in short she
Dreads lest the subject should transport me;
And flying off in search of reason,
Brings prudence back in proper season.
All I shall therefore say (whate'er
I think, is neither here nor there)
Is, that such lips, of looks endearing,
Were form'd for better things than sneering.
Of soothing compliments divested,
Advice at least 's disinterested;
Such is my artless song to thee,
From all the flow of flattery free;
Counsel like mine is as a brother's,
My heart is given to some others;
That is to say, unskill'd to cozen,
It shares itself among a dozen.
Marion, adieu! oh, pr'ythee slight not

This warning, though it may delight not;
And, lest my precepts be displeasing
To those who think remonstrance teasing,
At once I 'll tell thee our opinion
Concerning woman's soft dominion:
Howe'er we gaze with admiration
On eyes of blue or lips carnation,
Howe'er the flowing locks attract us,
Howe'er those beauties may distract us,
Still fickle, we are prone to rove,
These cannot fix our souls to love:
It is not too severe a stricture
To say they form a pretty picture;
But wouldst thou see the secret chain
Which binds us in your humble train,
To hail you queens of all creation,
Know, in a word, 't is Animation.

January 10, 1807.

TO A LADY

WHO PRESENTED TO THE AUTHOR A LOCK OF HAIR BRAIDED WITH HIS OWN, AND APPOINTED A NIGHT IN DECEMBER TO MEET HIM IN THE GARDEN

[This poem is addressed to the 'Mary' of the lines beginning, 'This faint resemblance of thy charms.']

These locks, which fondly thus entwine,
In firmer chains our hearts confine
Than all th' unmeaning protestations
Which swell with nonsense love orations.
Our love is fix'd, I think we 've proved it,
Nor time, nor place, nor art have moved it;
Then wherefore should we sigh and whine,
With groundless jealousy repine,
With silly whims and fancies frantic,
Merely to make our love romantic?
Why should you weep like Lydia Languish,
And fret with self-created anguish?
Or doom the lover you have chosen,
On winter nights to sigh half frozen;
In leafless shades to sue for pardon,
Only because the scene 's a garden?
For gardens seem, by one consent
(Since Shakspeare set the precedent,
Since Juliet first declared her passion),
To form the place of assignation.
Oh! would some modern muse inspire,
And seat her by a sea-coal fire;
Or had the bard at Christmas written,
And laid the scene of love in Britain,
He surely, in commiseration,
Had changed the place of declaration.
In Italy I 've no objection,
Warm nights are proper for reflection;
But here our climate is so rigid,
That love itself is rather frigid:
Think on our chilly situation,
And curb this rage for imitation.
Then let us meet, as oft we 've done,
Beneath the influence of the sun;
Or, if at midnight I must meet you,
Within your mansion let me greet you:
There we can love for hours together,
Much better, in such snowy weather,
Than placed in all th' Arcadian groves
That ever witness'd rural loves;
Then, if my passion fail to please,
Next night I 'll be content to freeze;
No more I 'll give a loose to laughter,
But curse my fate for ever after.

OSCAR OF ALVA

A TALE

['The catastrophe of this tale was suggested by the story of *Jeronymo and Lorenzo*, in the first volume of Schiller's *Armenian, or the Ghost-Seer*. It also bears some resemblance to a scene in the third act of *Macbeth*.' — Byron, *Note*.]

How sweetly shines through azure skies,
The lamp of heaven on Lora's shore;
Where Alva's hoary turrets rise,
And hear the din of arms no more.

But often has yon rolling moon
On Alva's casques of silver play'd;
And view'd, at midnight's silent noon,
Her chiefs in gleaming mail array'd:

And on the crimson'd rocks beneath,
Which scowl o'er ocean's sullen flow,
Pale in the scatter'd ranks of death,
She saw the gasping warrior low;

While many an eye which ne'er again
Could mark the rising orb of day,
Turn'd feebly from the gory plain,
Beheld in death her fading ray.

Once to those eyes the lamp of Love,
They blest her dear propitious light;
But now she glimmer'd from above,
A sad, funereal torch of night.

Faded is Alva's noble race,
And gray her towers are seen afar;
No more her heroes urge the chase,
Or roll the crimson tide of war.

But who was last of Alva's clan?
Why grows the moss on Alva's stone?
Her towers resound no steps of man,
They echo to the gale alone.

And when that gale is fierce and high,
A sound is heard in yonder hall;
It rises hoarsely through the sky,
And vibrates o'er the mouldering wall.

Yes, when the eddying tempest sighs,
It shakes the shield of Oscar brave;
But there no more his banners rise,
No more his plumes of sable wave.

Fair shone the sun on Oscar's birth,
When Angus hail'd his eldest born;
The vassals round their chieftain's hearth
Crowd to applaud the happy morn.

They feast upon the mountain deer,
The pibroch raised its piercing note;
To gladden more their highland cheer,
The strains in martial numbers float.

And they who heard the war-notes wild,
Hoped that one day the pibroch's strain
Should play before the hero's child,
While he should lead the tartan train.

Another year is quickly past,
And Angus hails another son;
His natal day is like the last,
Nor soon the jocund feast was done.

Taught by their sire to bend the bow,
On Alva's dusky hills of wind,
The boys in childhood chased the roe,
And left their hounds in speed behind.

But ere their years of youth are o'er,
They mingle in the ranks of war;
They lightly wheel the bright claymore,
And send the whistling arrow far.

Dark was the flow of Oscar's hair,
Wildly it stream'd along the gale;
But Allan's locks were bright and fair,
And pensive seem'd his cheek, and pale.

But Oscar own'd a hero's soul,
His dark eye shone through beams of truth;
Allan had early learn'd control,
And smooth his words had been from youth.

Both, both were brave: the Saxon spear
Was shiver'd oft beneath their steel;
And Oscar's bosom scorn'd to fear,
But Oscar's bosom knew to feel;

While Allan's soul belied his form,
Unworthy with such charms to dwell:
Keen as the lightning of the storm,
On foes his deadly vengeance fell.

From high Southannon's distant tower
Arrived a young and noble dame;
With Kenneth's lands to form her dower,
Glenalvon's blue-eyed daughter came;

And Oscar claim'd the beauteous bride,
And Angus on his Oscar smiled;
It soothed the father's feudal pride
Thus to obtain Glenalvon's child.

Hark to the pibroch's pleasing note!
Hark to the swelling nuptial song!
In joyous strains the voices float,
And still the choral peal prolong.

See how the heroes' blood-red plumes
Assembled wave in Alva's hall;
Each youth his varied plaid assumes,
Attending on their chieftain's call.

It is not war their aid demands,
The pibroch plays the song of peace;
To Oscar's nuptials throng the bands,
Nor yet the sounds of pleasure cease.

But where is Oscar? sure 't is late:
Is this a bridegroom's ardent flame?
While thronging guests and ladies wait,
Nor Oscar nor his brother came.

At length young Allan join'd the bride:
'Why comes not Oscar,' Angus said:
'Is he not here?' the youth replied;
'With me he roved not o'er the glade:

'Perchance forgetful of the day,
'T is his to chase the bounding roe;
Or ocean's waves prolong his stay;
Yet Oscar's bark is seldom slow.'

'Oh no!' the anguish'd sire rejoin'd,
'Nor chase nor wave my boy delay;
Would he to Mora seem unkind?
Would aught to her impede his way?

'Oh search, ye chiefs! oh search around!
Allan, with these through Alva fly;
Till Oscar, till my son is found,
Haste, haste, nor dare attempt reply.'

All is confusion — through the vale
The name of Oscar hoarsely rings,
It rises on the murmuring gale,
Till night expands her dusky wings.

It breaks the stillness of the night,
But echoes through her shades in vain;
It sounds through morning's misty light,
But Oscar comes not o'er the plain.

Three days, three sleepless nights, the Chief
For Oscar search'd each mountain cave;
Then hope is lost; in boundless grief,
His locks in gray-torn ringlets wave.

'Oscar! my son! — thou God of Heaven;
Restore the prop of sinking age!
Or if that hope no more is given,
Yield his assassin to my rage.

'Yes, on some desert rocky shore
My Oscar's whiten'd bones must lie;
Then grant, thou God! I ask no more,
With him his frantic sire may die!

'Yet he may live, — away, despair!
Be calm, my soul! he yet may live;
T' arraign my fate, my voice forbear!
O God! my impious prayer forgive.

'What, if he live for me no more,
I sink forgotten in the dust,
The hope of Alva's age is o'er;
Alas! can pangs like these be just?'

Thus did the hapless parent mourn,
Till Time, who soothes severest woe,
Had bade serenity return,
And made the tear-drop cease to flow.

For still some latent hope survived
That Oscar might once more appear;
His hope now droop'd and now revived,
Till Time had told a tedious year

Days roll'd along, the orb of light
Again had run his destined race;
No Oscar bless'd his father's sight,
And sorrow left a fainter trace.

For youthful Allan still remain'd,
And now his father's only joy;
And Mora's heart was quickly gain'd,
For beauty crown'd the fair-hair'd boy.

She thought that Oscar low was laid,
And Allan's face was wondrous fair;
If Oscar lived, some other maid
Had claim'd his faithless bosom's care.

And Angus said, if one year more
In fruitless hope was pass'd away,
His fondest scruples should be o'er,
And he would name their nuptial day.

Slow roll'd the moons, but blest at last
Arrived the dearly destined morn;
The year of anxious trembling past,
What smiles the lovers' cheeks adorn!

Hark to the pibroch's pleasing note!
Hark to the swelling nuptial song!
In joyous strains the voices float,
And still the choral peal prolong.

Again the clan, in festive crowd,
Throng through the gate of Alva's hall;
The sounds of mirth re-echo loud,
And all their former joy recall.

But who is he, whose darken'd brow
Glooms in the midst of general mirth?
Before his eyes' far fiercer glow
The blue flames curdle o'er the hearth.

Dark is the robe which wraps his form,
And tall his plume of gory red;
His voice is like the rising storm,
But light and trackless is his tread.

'T is noon of night, the pledge goes round,
The bridegroom's health is deeply quaff'd;
With shouts the vaulted roofs resound,
And all combine to hail the draught.

Sudden the stranger-chief arose,
And all the clamorous crowd are hush'd;
And Angus' cheek with wonder glows,
And Mora's tender bosom blush'd.

'Old man!' he cried, 'this pledge is done;
Thou saw'st 't was duly drunk by me:
It hail'd the nuptials of thy son;
Now will I claim a pledge from thee.

'While all around is mirth and joy,
To bless thy Allan's happy lot,
Say, hadst thou ne'er another boy?
Say, why should Oscar be forgot?'

'Alas!' the hapless sire replied,
The big tear starting as he spoke,
'When Oscar left my hall, or died,
This aged heart was almost broke.

'Thrice has the earth revolved her course
Since Oscar's form has bless'd my sight;
And Allan is my last resource,
Since martial Oscar's death or flight.'

''T is well,' replied the stranger stern,
And fiercely flash'd his rolling eye:
'Thy Oscar's fate I fain would learn;
Perhaps the hero did not die.

'Perchance, if those whom most he loved
Would call, thy Oscar might return;
Perchance the chief has only roved;
For him thy Beltane yet may burn.

'Fill high the bowl the table round,
We will not claim the pledge by stealth:
With wine let every cup be crown'd;
Pledge me departed Oscar's health.'

'With all my soul,' old Angus said,
And fill'd his goblet to the brim;
'Here 's to my boy! alive or dead,
I ne'er shall find a son like him.'

'Bravely, old man, this health has sped;
But why does Allan trembling stand?
Come, drink remembrance of the dead,
And raise thy cup with firmer hand.'

The crimson glow of Allan's face
Was turn'd at once to ghastly hue;
The drops of death each other chase
Adown in agonizing dew.

Thrice did he raise the goblet high,
And thrice his lips refused to taste;
For thrice he caught the stranger's eye
On his with deadly fury placed.

'And is it thus a brother hails
A brother's fond remembrance here?
If thus affection's strength prevails,
What might we not expect from fear?'

Roused by the sneer, he raised the bowl,
'Would Oscar now could share our mirth!'
Internal fear appall'd his soul;
He said, and dash'd the cup to earth.

''T is he! I hear my murderer's voice!'
Loud shrieks a darkly gleaming form;
'A murderer's voice!' the roof replies,
And deeply swells the bursting storm.

The tapers wink, the chieftains shrink,
The stranger 's gone, — amidst the crew
A form was seen in tartan green,
And tall the shade terrific grew.

His waist was bound with a broad belt round,
His plume of sable stream'd on high;
But his breast was bare, with the red wounds there,
And fix'd was the glare of his glassy eye.

And thrice he smiled, with his eye so wild,
On Angus bending low the knee;
And thrice he frown'd on a chief on the ground,
Whom shivering crowds with horror see.

The bolts loud roll from pole to pole,
The thunders through the welkin ring,
And the gleaming form, through the mist of the storm,
Was borne on high by the whirlwind's wing.

Cold was the feast, the revel ceased, —
Who lies upon the stony floor?
Oblivion press'd old Angus' breast,
At length his life-pulse throbs once more.

'Away, away! let the leech essay
To pour the light on Allan's eyes:'
His sand is done, — his race is run;
Oh, never more shall Allan rise!

But Oscar's breast is cold as clay,
His locks are lifted by the gale;
And Allan's barbed arrow lay
With him in dark Glentanar's vale.

And whence the dreadful stranger came,
Or who, no mortal wight can tell;
But no one doubts the form of flame,
For Alva's sons knew Oscar well.

Ambition nerved young Allan's hand,
Exulting demons wing'd his dart;
While Envy waved her burning brand,
And pour'd her venom round his heart.

Swift is the shaft from Allan's bow;
Whose streaming life-blood stains his side?
Dark Oscar's sable crest is low,
The dart has drunk his vital tide.

And Mora's eye could Allan move,
She bade his wounded pride rebel;
Alas! that eyes which beam'd with love
Should urge the soul to deeds of hell.

Lo! seest thou not a lonely tomb
Which rises o'er a warrior dead?
It glimmers through the twilight gloom;
Oh! that is Allan's nuptial bed.

Far, distant far, the noble grave
Which held his clan's great ashes stood;
And o'er his corse no banners wave,
For they were stain'd with kindred blood.

What minstrel gray, what hoary bard,
Shall Allan's deeds on harp-strings raise?
The song is glory's chief reward,
But who can strike a murderer's praise?

Unstrung, untouch'd, the harp must stand,
No minstrel dare the theme awake;
Guilt would benumb his palsied hand,
His harp in shuddering chords would break.

No lyre of fame, no hallow'd verse,
Shall sound his glories high in air:
A dying father's bitter curse,
A brother's death-groan echoes there.

THE EPISODE OF NISUS AND EURYALUS

A PARAPHRASE FROM THE ÆNEID, LIB. IX

Nisus, the guardian of the portal, stood,
Eager to gild his arms with hostile blood;
Well skill'd in fight the quivering lance to wield,
Or pour his arrows through th' embattled field:
From Ida torn, he left his sylvan cave,
And sought a foreign home, a distant grave.
To watch the movements of the Daunian host,
With him Euryalus sustains the post;
No lovelier mien adorn'd the ranks of Troy,
And beardless bloom yet graced the gallant boy;
Though few the seasons of his youthful life,
As yet a novice in the martial strife,
'T was his, with beauty, valour's gifts to share —
A soul heroic, as his form was fair.
These burn with one pure flame of generous love;
In peace, in war, united still they move;
Friendship and glory form their joint reward;
And now combined they hold their nightly guard.

'What god,' exclaim'd the first, 'instils this fire?
Or, in itself a god, what great desire?
My labouring soul, with anxious thought oppress'd,
Abhors this station of inglorious rest;
The love of fame with this can ill accord,
Be 't mine to seek for glory with my sword.
Seest thou yon camp, with torches twinkling dim,
Where drunken slumbers wrap each lazy limb?
Where confidence and ease the watch disdain,
And drowsy Silence holds her sable reign?
Then hear my thought: — In deep and sullen grief
Our troops and leaders mourn their absent chief:
Now could the gifts and promised prize be thine
(The deed, the danger, and the fame be mine),
Were this decreed, beneath yon rising mound,
Methinks, an easy path perchance were found;
Which past, I speed my way to Pallas' walls,
And lead Æneas from Evander's halls.'

With equal ardour fired and warlike joy,
His glowing friend address'd the Dardan boy:—
'These deeds, my Nisus, shalt thou dare alone?
Must all the fame, the peril, be thine own?
Am I by thee despised and left afar,
As one unfit to share the toils of war?
Not thus his son the great Opheltes taught;
Not thus my sire in Argive combats fought;
Not thus, when Ilion fell by heavenly hate,
I track'd Æneas through the walks of fate:
Thou know'st my deeds, my breast devoid of fear,
And hostile life-drops dim my gory spear.
Here is a soul with hope immortal burns,
And life, ignoble life, for *glory* spurns.
Fame, fame is cheaply earn'd by fleeting breath:
The price of honour is the sleep of death.'

Then Nisus,—'Calm thy bosom's fond alarms,
Thy heart beats fiercely to the din of arms.
More dear thy worth and valour than my own,
I swear by him who fills Olympus' throne!
So may I triumph, as I speak the truth,
And clasp again the comrade of my youth!
But should I fall,—and he who dares advance
Through hostile legions must abide by chance,—
If some Rutulian arm, with adverse blow,
Should lay the friend, who ever loved thee, low,
Live thou—such beauties I would fain preserve—
Thy budding years a lengthen'd term deserve.
When humbled in the dust, let some one be
Whose gentle eyes will shed one tear for me;
Whose manly arm may snatch me back by force,
Or wealth redeem from foes my captive corse;
Or, if my destiny these last deny,
If in the spoiler's power my ashes lie,
Thy pious care may raise a simple tomb,
To mark thy love, and signalize my doom.
Why should thy doting wretched mother weep
Her only boy, reclined in endless sleep?
Who, for thy sake, the tempest's fury dared,
Who, for thy sake, war's deadly peril shared;
Who braved what woman never braved before,
And left her native for the Latian shore.'
'In vain you damp the ardour of my soul,'
Replied Euryalus; 'it scorns control!
Hence, let us haste!'—their brother guards arose,
Roused by their call, nor court again repose;
The pair, buoy'd up on Hope's exulting wing,
Their stations leave and speed to seek the king.

Now o'er the earth a solemn stillness ran,
And lull'd alike the cares of brute and man;
Save where the Dardan leaders nightly hold
Alternate converse, and their plans unfold.
On one great point the council are agreed,
An instant message to their prince decreed;
Each lean'd upon the lance he well could wield,
And poised with easy arm his ancient shield;
When Nisus and his friend their leave request
To offer something to their high behest.
With anxious tremors, yet unawed by fear,
The faithful pair before the throne appear:
Iulus greets them; at his kind command,
The elder first address'd the hoary band.

'With patience' (thus Hyrtacides began),
'Attend, nor judge from youth our humble plan.
Where yonder beacons half-expiring beam,
Our slumbering foes of future conquest dream,
Nor heed that we a secret path have traced,
Between the ocean and the portal placed,
Beneath the covert of the blackening smoke
Whose shade securely our design will cloak!
If you, ye chiefs, and fortune will allow,
We 'll bend our course to yonder mountain's brow,

Where Pallas' walls at distance meet the sight,
Seen o'er the glade, when not obscured by night.
Then shall Æneas in his pride return,
While hostile matrons raise their offspring's urn;
And Latian spoils and purpled heaps of dead
Shall mark the havoc of our hero's tread.
Such is our purpose, not unknown the way;
Where yonder torrent's devious waters stray,
Oft have we seen, when hunting by the stream,
The distant spires above the valleys gleam.'

Mature in years, for sober wisdom famed,
Moved by the speech, Alethes here exclaim'd, —
'Ye parent gods! who rule the fate of Troy,
Still dwells the Dardan spirit in the boy;
When minds like these in striplings thus ye raise,
Yours is the godlike act, be yours the praise;
In gallant youth my fainting hopes revive,
And Ilion's wonted glories still survive.'
Then in his warm embrace the boys he press'd,
And, quivering, strain'd them to his aged breast;
With tears the burning cheek of each bedew'd,
And, sobbing, thus his first discourse renew'd:
'What gift, my countrymen, what martial prize
Can we bestow, which you may not despise?
Our deities the first best boon have given —
Internal virtues are the gift of Heaven.
What poor rewards can bless your deeds on earth,
Doubtless await such young, exalted worth.
Æneas and Ascanius shall combine
To yield applause far, far surpassing mine.'
Iulus then: — 'By all the powers above!
By those Penates who my country love!
By hoary Vesta's sacred fane, I swear,
My hopes are all in you, ye generous pair!
Restore my father to my grateful sight,
And all my sorrows yield to one delight.
Nisus! two silver goblets are thine own,
Saved from Arisba's stately domes o'erthrown;
My sire secured them on that fatal day,
Nor left such bowls an Argive robber's prey.
Two massy tripods, also, shall be thine;
Two talents polish'd from the glittering mine;
An ancient cup, which Tyrian Dido gave,
While yet our vessels press'd the Punic wave.
But when the hostile chiefs at length bow down,
When great Æneas wears Hesperia's crown,
The casque, the buckler, and the fiery steed
Which Turnus guides with more than mortal speed,
Are thine; no envious lot shall then be cast,
I pledge my word, irrevocably past:
Nay more, twelve slaves, and twice six captive dames
To soothe thy softer hours with amorous flames,
And all the realms which now the Latins sway,
The labours of to-night shall well repay.
But thou, my generous youth, whose tender years
Are near my own, whose worth my heart reveres,
Henceforth affection, sweetly thus begun,
Shall join our bosoms and our souls in one.
Without thy aid no glory shall be mine;
Without thy dear advice, no great design;
Alike through life esteem'd, thou godlike boy,
In war my bulwark, and in peace my joy.'

To him Euryalus: — 'No day shall shame
The rising glories which from this I claim.
Fortune may favour, or the skies may frown,
But valour, spite of fate, obtains renown.
Yet, ere from hence our eager steps depart,
One boon I beg, the nearest to my heart:
My mother, sprung from Priam's royal line,
Like thine ennobled, hardly less divine,
Nor Troy nor king Acestes' realms restrain
Her feeble age from dangers of the main;
Alone she came, all selfish fears above,
A bright example of maternal love.
Unknown the secret enterprise I brave,
Lest grief should bend my parent to the grave,
From this alone no fond adieus I seek,

No fainting mother's lips have press'd my cheek;
By gloomy night and thy right hand I vow
Her parting tears would shake my purpose now.
Do thou, my prince, her failing age sustain,
In thee her much-loved child may live again:
Her dying hours with pious conduct bless,
Assist her wants, relieve her fond distress:
So dear a hope must all my soul inflame,
To rise in glory, or to fall in fame.'
Struck with a filial care so deeply felt,
In tears at once the Trojan warriors melt:
Faster than all, Iulus' eyes o'erflow;
Such love was his, and such had been his woe.
'All thou hast ask'd, receive,' the prince replied;
'Nor this alone, but many a gift beside.
To cheer thy mother's years shall be my aim,
Creusa's style but wanting to the dame.
Fortune an adverse wayward course may run,
But bless'd thy mother in so dear a son.
Now, by my life! — my sire's most sacred oath —
To thee I pledge my full, my firmest troth,
All the rewards which once to thee were vow'd,
If thou shouldst fall, on her shall be bestow'd.'
Thus spoke the weeping prince, then forth to view
A gleaming falchion from the sheath he drew;
Lycaon's utmost skill had graced the steel,
For friends to envy and for foes to feel.
A tawny hide, the Moorish lion's spoil,
Slain 'midst the forest in the hunter's toil,
Mnestheus to guard the elder youth bestows,
And old Alethes' casque defends his brows.
Arm'd, thence they go, while all th' assembled train
To aid their cause implore the gods in vain.
More than a boy, in wisdom and in grace,
Iulus holds amidst the chiefs his place:
His prayer he sends; but what can prayers avail,
Lost in the murmurs of the sighing gale!

The trench is pass'd, and, favour'd by the night,
Through sleeping foes they wheel their wary flight.
When shall the sleep of many a foe be o'er?
Alas, some slumber who shall wake no more!
Chariots and bridles, mix'd with arms, are seen;
And flowing flasks, and scatter'd troops between:
Bacchus and Mars to rule the camp combine;
A mingled chaos this of war and wine.
'Now,' cries the first, 'for deeds of blood prepare,
With me the conquest and the labour share.
Here lies our path; lest any hand arise,
Watch thou, while many a dreaming chieftain dies:
I'll carve our passage through the heedless foe,
And clear thy road with many a deadly blow.'
His whispering accents then the youth repress'd,
And pierced proud Rhamnes through his panting breast:
Stretch'd at his ease, th' incautious king reposed;
Debauch, and not fatigue, his eyes had closed:
To Turnus dear, a prophet and a prince,
His omens more than augur's skill evince;
But he, who thus foretold the fate of all,
Could not avert his own untimely fall.
Next Remus' armour-bearer, hapless, fell,
And three unhappy slaves the carnage swell;
The charioteer along his courser's sides
Expires, the steel his sever'd neck divides;
And, last, his lord is number'd with the dead:
Bounding convulsive, flies the gasping head:
From the swoll'n veins the blackening torrents pour;
Stain'd is the couch and earth with clotting gore.
Young Lamyrus and Lamus next expire,
And gay Serranus, fill'd with youthful fire;
Half the long night in childish games was pass'd;
Lull'd by the potent grape, he slept at last:
Ah! happier far, had he the morn survey'd
And till Aurora's dawn his skill display'd.

In slaughter'd fold, the keepers lost in sleep,
His hungry fangs a lion thus may steep.

'Mid the sad flock at dead of night he prowls, 261
With murder glutted, and in carnage rolls:
Insatiate still, through teeming herds he roams;
In seas of gore the lordly tyrant foams.

Nor less the other's deadly vengeance came,
But falls on feeble crowds without a name.
His wound unconscious Fadus scarce can feel,
Yet wakeful Rhæsus sees the threatening steel;
His coward breast behind a jar he hides,
And vainly in the weak defence confides;
Full in his heart the falchion search'd his veins, 271
The reeking weapon bears alternate stains;
Through wine and blood, commingling as they flow,
One feeble spirit seeks the shades below.
Now where Messapus dwelt they bend their way,
Whose fires emit a faint and trembling ray;
There, unconfined, behold each grazing steed,
Unwatch'd, unheeded, on the herbage feed.
Brave Nisus here arrests his comrade's arm,
Too flush'd with carnage, and with conquest warm: 280
'Hence let us haste, the dangerous path is pass'd;
Full foes enough to-night have breathed their last:
Soon will the day those eastern clouds adorn;
Now let us speed, nor tempt the rising morn.'

What silver arms with various art emboss'd,
What bowls and mantles in confusion toss'd
They leave regardless! yet one glittering prize
Attracts the younger hero's wandering eyes;
The gilded harness Rhamnes' coursers felt,
The gems which stud the monarch's golden belt: 290
This from the pallid corse was quickly torn,
Once by a line of former chieftains worn.
Th' exulting boy the studded girdle wears,
Messapus' helm his head in triumph bears;
Then from the tents their cautious steps they bend,
To seek the vale where safer paths extend.

Just at this hour a band of Latian horse
To Turnus' camp pursue their destined course:
While the slow foot their tardy march delay,
The knights, impatient, spur along the way:
Three hundred mail-clad men, by Volscens led, 301
To Turnus with their master's promise sped:
Now they approach the trench, and view the walls,
When, on the left, a light reflection falls;
The plunder'd helmet, through the waning night,
Sheds forth a silver radiance, glancing bright.
Volscens with question loud the pair alarms: —
'Stand, stragglers! stand! why early thus in arms?
From whence, to whom?' — He meets with no reply;
Trusting the covert of the night, they fly:
The thicket's depth with hurried pace they tread, 311
While round the wood the hostile squadron spread.

With brakes entangled, scarce a path between,
Dreary and dark appears the sylvan scene.
Euryalus his heavy spoils impede,
The boughs and winding turns his steps mislead;
But Nisus scours along the forest's maze
To where Latinus' steeds in safety graze,
Then backward o'er the plain his eyes extend, 319
On every side they seek his absent friend.
'O God! my boy,' he cries, 'of me bereft,
In what impending perils art thou left!'
Listening he runs — above the waving trees
Tumultuous voices swell the passing breeze;
The war-cry rises, thundering hoofs around
Wake the dark echoes of the trembling ground.
Again he turns, of footsteps hears the noise;
The sound elates, the sight his hope destroys:
The hapless boy a ruffian train surround,
While lengthening shades his weary way confound; 330
Him with loud shouts the furious knights pursue,
Struggling in vain, a captive to the crew.

What can his friend 'gainst thronging numbers dare ?
Ah ! must he rush his comrade's fate to share ?
What force, what aid, what stratagem essay,
Back to redeem the Latian spoiler's prey ?
His life a votive ransom nobly give,
Or die with him for whom he wish'd to live ?
Poising with strength his lifted lance on high,
On Luna's orb he cast his frenzied eye: —
'Goddess serene, transcending every star !
Queen of the sky, whose beams are seen afar !
By night heaven owns thy sway, by day the grove,
When, as chaste Dian, here thou deign'st to rove;
If e'er myself or sire have sought to grace
Thine altars with the produce of the chase,
Speed, speed my dart to pierce yon vaunting crowd,
To free my friend, and scatter far the proud.'
Thus having said, the hissing dart he flung;
Through parted shades the hurtling weapon sung;
The thirsty point in Sulmo's entrails lay,
Transfix'd his heart, and stretch'd him on the clay:
He sobs, he dies, — the troop in wild amaze,
Unconscious whence the death, with horror gaze:
While pale they stare, through Tagus' temples riven,
A second shaft with equal force is driven.
Fierce Volscens rolls around his lowering eyes;
Veil'd by the night, secure the Trojan lies.
Burning with wrath, he view'd his soldiers fall:
'Thou youth accurst, thy life shall pay for all !'
Quick from the sheath his flaming glaive he drew,
And, raging, on the boy defenceless flew.
Nisus no more the blackening shade conceals,
Forth, forth, he starts, and all his love reveals;
Aghast, confused, his fears to madness rise,
And pour these accents, shrieking as he flies:
'Me, me, — your vengeance hurl on me alone;
Here sheathe the steel, my blood is all your own.
Ye starry spheres ! thou conscious Heaven ! attest !
He could not — durst not — lo ! the guile confest !
All, all was mine, — his early fate suspend;
He only loved too well his hapless friend:
Spare, spare, ye chiefs ! from him your rage remove;
His fault was friendship, all his crime was love.'
He pray'd in vain; the dark assassin's sword
Pierced the fair side, the snowy bosom gored;
Lowly to earth inclines his plume-clad crest,
And sanguine torrents mantle o'er his breast.
As some young rose, whose blossom scents the air,
Languid in death, expires beneath the share;
Or crimson poppy, sinking with the shower,
Declining gently, falls a fading flower;
Thus, sweetly drooping, bends his lovely head,
And lingering beauty hovers round the dead.

But fiery Nisus stems the battle's tide,
Revenge his leader, and despair his guide;
Volscens he seeks amidst the gathering host,
Volscens must soon appease his comrade's ghost;
Steel, flashing, pours on steel, foe crowds on foe;
Rage nerves his arm, fate gleams in every blow;
In vain beneath unnumber'd wounds he bleeds,
Nor wounds, nor death, distracted Nisus heeds;
In viewless circles wheel'd, his falchion flies,
Nor quits the hero's grasp till Volscens dies:
Deep in his throat its end the weapon found,
The tyrant's soul fled groaning through the wound.
Thus Nisus all his fond affection proved —
Dying, revenged the fate of him he loved;
Then on his bosom sought his wonted place,
And death was heavenly in his friend's embrace.

Celestial pair, if aught my verse can claim,
Wafted on Time's broad pinion, yours is fame !
Ages on ages shall your fate admire,
No future day shall see your names expire,
While stands the Capitol, immortal dome !
And vanquish'd millions hail their empress, Rome !

TRANSLATION FROM THE MEDEA OF EURIPIDES

Ἔρωτες ὑπὲρ μὲν ἄγαν, κ. τ. λ.

When fierce conflicting passions urge
The breast where love is wont to glow,
What mind can stem the stormy surge
Which rolls the tide of human woe?
The hope of praise, the dread of shame,
Can rouse the tortured breast no more;
The wild desire, the guilty flame,
Absorbs each wish it felt before.

But if affection gently thrills
The soul by purer dreams possest,
The pleasing balm of mortal ills
In love can soothe the aching breast:
If thus thou comest in disguise,
Fair Venus! from thy native heaven,
What heart unfeeling would despise
The sweetest boon the gods have given?

But never from thy golden bow
May I beneath the shaft expire!
Whose creeping venom, sure and slow,
Awakes an all-consuming fire:
Ye racking doubts! ye jealous fears!
With others wage internal war;
Repentance, source of future tears,
From me be ever distant far!

May no distracting thoughts destroy
The holy calm of sacred love!
May all the hours be wing'd with joy,
Which hover faithful hearts above!
Fair Venus, on thy myrtle shrine
May I with some fair lover sigh,
Whose heart may mingle pure with mine —
With me to live, with me to die!

My native soil! beloved before,
Now dearer as my peaceful home,
Ne'er may I quit thy rocky shore,
A hapless banish'd wretch to roam!
This very day, this very hour,
May I resign this fleeting breath;
Nor quit my silent humble bower,
A doom to me far worse than death.

Have I not heard the exile's sigh?
And seen the exile's silent tear,
Through distant climes condemn'd to fly,
A pensive, weary wanderer here?
Ah, hapless dame! no sire bewails,
No friend thy wretched fate deplores,
No kindred voice with rapture hails
Thy steps within a stranger's doors.

Perish the fiend whose iron heart,
To fair affection's truth unknown,
Bids her he fondly loved depart,
Unpitied, helpless, and alone;
Who ne'er unlocks with silver key
The milder treasures of his soul, —
May such a friend be far from me,
And ocean's storms between us roll!

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY A COLLEGE EXAMINATION

High in the midst, surrounded by his peers,
Magnus his ample front sublime uprears:
Placed on his chair of state, he seems a god,
While Sophs and Freshmen tremble at his nod.
As all around sit wrapt in speechless gloom,
His voice in thunder shakes the sounding dome;
Denouncing dire reproach to luckless fools,
Unskill'd to plod in mathematic rules.

Happy the youth in Euclid's axioms tried,
Though little versed in any art beside;
Who, scarcely skill'd an English line to pen,
Scans Attic metres with a critic's ken.
What though he knows not how his fathers bled,
When civil discord piled the fields with dead,
When Edward bade his conquering bands advance,
Or Henry trampled on the crest of France;
Though marvelling at the name of Magna Charta,
Yet well he recollects the laws of Sparta;
Can tell what edicts sage Lycurgus made,
While Blackstone's on the shelf neglected laid;
Of Grecian dramas vaunts the deathless fame,
Of Avon's bard remembering scarce the name.

Such is the youth whose scientific pate
Class-honours, medals, fellowships, await;
Or even, perhaps, the declamation prize,
If to such glorious height he lifts his eyes.
But lo! no common orator can hope
The envied silver cup within his scope.
Not that our heads much eloquence require,
Th' Athenian's glowing style, or Tully's fire.
A manner clear or warm is useless, since
We do not try by speaking to convince.
Be other orators of pleasing proud:
We speak to please ourselves, not move the crowd:
Our gravity prefers the muttering tone,
A proper mixture of the squeak and groan:
No borrow'd grace of action must be seen;
The slightest motion would displease the Dean,
Whilst every staring graduate would prate
Against what he could never imitate.

The man who hopes t' obtain the promised cup
Must in one posture stand, and ne'er look up;
Nor stop, but rattle over every word —
No matter what, so it can *not* be heard.
Thus let him hurry on, nor think to rest:
Who speaks the fastest 's sure to speak the best;
Who utters most within the shortest space
May safely hope to win the wordy race.

The sons of science these, who, thus repaid,
Linger in ease in Granta's sluggish shade;
Where on Cam's sedgy banks supine they lie,
Unknown, unhonour'd live, unwept for die:
Dull as the pictures which adorn their halls,
They think all learning fix'd within their walls:
In manners rude, in foolish forms precise,
All modern arts affecting to despise;
Yet prizing Bentley's, Brunck's, or Porson's note,
More than the verse on which the critic wrote:
Vain as their honours, heavy as their ale,
Sad as their wit, and tedious as their tale;
To friendship dead, though not untaught to feel
When Self and Church demand a bigot zeal.
With eager haste they court the lord of power,
Whether 't is Pitt or Petty rules the hour;
To him, with suppliant smiles, they bend the head,
While distant mitres to their eyes are spread.
But should a storm o'erwhelm him with disgrace,
They 'd fly to seek the next who fill'd his place.
Such are the men who learning's treasures guard!
Such is their practice, such is their reward!
This much, at least, we may presume to say —
The premium can't exceed the price they pay.

1806.

TO A BEAUTIFUL QUAKER

Sweet girl! though only once we met,
That meeting I shall ne'er forget;
And though we ne'er may meet again,
Remembrance will thy form retain.
I would not say, 'I love,' but still
My senses struggle with my will:
In vain, to drive thee from my breast,
My thoughts are more and more represt;
In vain I check the rising sighs,
Another to the last replies:
Perhaps this is not love, but yet
Our meeting I can ne'er forget.

What though we never silence broke,
Our eyes a sweeter language spoke.
The tongue in flattering falsehood deals,
And tells a tale it never feels;
Deceit the guilty lips impart,
And hush the mandates of the heart;
But soul's interpreters, the eyes,
Spurn such restraint and scorn disguise.
As thus our glances oft conversed,
And all our bosoms felt, rehearsed,
No spirit, from within, reproved us,
Say rather, ''t was the spirit moved us.'
Though what they utter'd I repress,
Yet I conceive thou 'lt partly guess;
For as on thee my memory ponders,
Perchance to me thine also wanders.
This for myself, at least, I 'll say,
Thy form appears through night, through day:

Awake, with it my fancy teems;
In sleep, it smiles in fleeting dreams;
The vision charms the hours away,
And bids me curse Aurora's ray
For breaking slumbers of delight
Which make me wish for endless night:
Since, oh! whate'er my future fate,
Shall joy or woe my steps await,
Tempted by love, by storms beset,
Thine image I can ne'er forget.

Alas! again no more we meet,
No more our former looks repeat;
Then let me breathe this parting prayer,
The dictate of my bosom's care:
'May Heaven so guard my lovely quaker,
That anguish never can o'ertake her;
That peace and virtue ne'er forsake her,
But bliss be aye her heart's partaker!
Oh, may the happy mortal, fated
To be by dearest ties related,
For her each hour new joys discover,
And lose the husband in the lover!
May that fair bosom never know
What 't is to feel the restless woe
Which stings the soul with vain regret,
Of him who never can forget!'
August, 1806.

THE CORNELIAN

[The cornelian was given him by the Cambridge chorister, Edleston.]

No specious splendour of this stone
Endears it to my memory ever;
With lustre only once it shone,
And blushes modest as the giver.

Some, who can sneer at friendship's ties,
Have, for my weakness, oft reproved me;
Yet still the simple gift I prize, —
For I am sure the giver loved me.

He offer'd it with downcast look,
As fearful that I might refuse it;
I told him when the gift I took,
My only fear should be to lose it.

This pledge attentively I view'd,
And sparkling as I held it near,
Methought one drop the stone bedew'd,
And ever since I 've loved a tear.

Still, to adorn his humble youth,
Nor wealth nor birth their treasures yield;
But he who seeks the flowers of truth,
Must quit the garden for the field.

'T is not the plant uprear'd in sloth,
Which beauty shows, and sheds perfume;
The flowers which yield the most of both
In Nature's wild luxuriance bloom.

Had Fortune aided Nature's care,
For once forgetting to be blind,
His would have been an ample share,
If well proportion'd to his mind.

But had the goddess clearly seen,
His form had fix'd her fickle breast;
Her countless hoards would his have been,
And none remain'd to give the rest.

AN OCCASIONAL PROLOGUE

DELIVERED PREVIOUS TO THE PERFORMANCE OF 'THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE' AT A PRIVATE THEATRE

[This prologue was written by Byron, between stages, on his way from Harrowgate to Southwell, in 1806, where he took part in private theatricals.]

Since the refinement of this polish'd age
Has swept immoral raillery from the stage;
Since taste has now expunged licentious wit,
Which stamp'd disgrace on all an author writ;
Since now to please with purer scenes we seek,
Nor dare to call the blush from Beauty's cheek;
Oh! let the modest Muse some pity claim,
And meet indulgence, though she find not fame.
Still, not for her alone we wish respect,
Others appear more conscious of defect:
To-night no veteran Roscii you behold,
In all the arts of scenic action old;
No Cooke, no Kemble, can salute you here,
No Siddons draw the sympathetic tear;
To-night you throng to witness the *début*
Of embryo actors, to the Drama new.
Here, then, our almost unfledged wings we try;
Clip not our pinions ere the birds can fly:
Failing in this our first attempt to soar,

Drooping, alas! we fall to rise no more.
Not one poor trembler only fear betrays,
Who hopes, yet almost dreads, to meet your praise;
But all our dramatis personæ wait
In fond suspense this crisis of their fate.
No venal views our progress can retard,
Your generous plaudits are our sole reward;
For these, each Hero all his power displays,
Each timid Heroine shrinks before your gaze.
Surely the last will some protection find;
None to the softer sex can prove unkind:
While Youth and Beauty form the female shield,
The sternest censor to the fair must yield.
Yet, should our feeble efforts nought avail,
Should, after all, our best endeavours fail,
Still let some mercy in your bosoms live,
And, if you can't applaud, at least forgive.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. FOX

THE FOLLOWING ILLIBERAL IMPROMPTU APPEARED IN A MORNING PAPER

[The 'illiberal impromptu' appeared in the *Morning Post*, and Byron's reply, which was written at Southwell, October, 1806, appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*.]

'Our nation's foes lament on Fox's death,
But bless the hour when Pitt resign'd his breath:
These feelings wide, let sense and truth unclue,
We give the palm where Justice points its due.'

TO WHICH THE AUTHOR OF THESE PIECES SENT THE FOLLOWING REPLY

Oh factious viper! whose envenom'd tooth
Would mangle still the dead, perverting truth;
What though our 'nation's foes' lament the fate,
With generous feeling, of the good and great,
Shall dastard tongues essay to blast the name
Of him whose meed exists in endless fame?
When Pitt expired in plenitude of power,
Though ill success obscured his dying hour,
Pity her dewy wings before him spread,
For noble spirits 'war not with the dead:'
His friends, in tears, a last sad requiem gave,
As all his errors slumber'd in the grave.
He sunk, an Atlas bending 'neath the weight
Of cares o'erwhelming our conflicting state:
When, lo! a Hercules in Fox appear'd,
Who for a time the ruin'd fabric rear'd.
He, too, is fall'n, who Britain's loss supplied,
With him our fast-reviving hopes have died;
Not one great people only raise his urn,
All Europe's far-extended regions mourn.
'These feelings wide, let sense and truth unclue,
To give the palm where Justice points its due;'
Yet let not canker'd Calumny assail,
Or round our statesman wind her gloomy veil.
Fox! o'er whose corse a mourning world must weep,
Whose dear remains in honour'd marble sleep;
For whom, at last, e'en hostile nations groan,
While friends and foes alike his talents own;
Fox shall in Britain's future annals shine,
Nor e'en to Pitt the patriot's palm resign;
Which Envy, wearing Candour's sacred mask,
For Pitt, and Pitt alone, has dared to ask.

THE TEAR

O lachrymarum fons, tenero sacros
Ducentium ortus ex animo; quater
Felix! in imo qui scatentem
Pectore te, pia Nympha, sensit. — Gray.

When Friendship or Love our sympathies move,
When Truth in a glance should appear,
The lips may beguile with a dimple or smile,
But the test of affection's a Tear.

Too oft is a smile but the hypocrite's wile
To mask detestation or fear;
Give me the soft sigh, whilst the soul-telling eye
Is dimm'd for a time with a Tear.

Mild Charity's glow, to us mortals below,
Shows the soul from barbarity clear;
Compassion will melt where this virtue is felt,
And its dew is diffused in a Tear.

The man doom'd to sail with the blast of the gale,
Through billows Atlantic to steer,
As he bends o'er the wave which may soon be his grave,
The green sparkles bright with a Tear.

The soldier braves death for a fanciful wreath
In Glory's romantic career;
But he raises the foe when in battle laid low,
And bathes every wound with a Tear.

If with high-bounding pride he return to his bride,
Renouncing the gore-crimson'd spear,
All his toils are repaid when, embracing the maid,
From her eyelid he kisses the Tear.

Sweet scene of my youth! seat of Friendship and Truth,
Where love chased each fast-fleeting year,
Loth to leave thee, I mourn'd, for a last look I turn'd,
But thy spire was scarce seen through a Tear.

Though my vows I can pour to my Mary no more,
My Mary to Love once so dear,
In the shade of her bower I remember the hour
She rewarded those vows with a Tear.

By another possest, may she live ever blest!
Her name still my heart must revere:
With a sigh I resign what I once thought was mine,
And forgive her deceit with a Tear.

Ye friends of my heart, ere from you I depart,
This hope to my breast is most near:
If again we shall meet in this rural retreat,
May we meet, as we part, with a Tear.

When my soul wings her flight to the regions of night,
And my corse shall recline on its bier,
As ye pass by the tomb where my ashes consume,
Oh! moisten their dust with a Tear.

May no marble bestow the splendour of woe,
Which the children of vanity rear;
No fiction of fame shall blazon my name,
All I ask — all I wish — is a Tear.

October 26, 1806.

REPLY TO SOME VERSES OF J. M. B. PIGOT, ESQ., ON THE CRUELTY OF HIS MISTRESS

Why, Pigot, complain of this damsel's disdain,
Why thus in despair do you fret?
For months you may try, yet, believe me, a sigh
Will never obtain a coquette.

Would you teach her to love? for a time seem to rove;
At first she may frown in a pet;
But leave her awhile, she shortly will smile,
And then you may kiss your coquette.

For such are the airs of these fanciful fairs,
They think all our homage a debt:
Yet a partial neglect soon takes an effect,
And humbles the proudest coquette.

Dissemble your pain, and lengthen your chain,
And seem her hauteur to regret;
If again you shall sigh, she no more will deny
That yours is the rosy coquette.

If still, from false pride, your pangs she deride,
This whimsical virgin forget;
Some other admire, who will melt with your fire,
And laugh at the little coquette.

For me, I adore some twenty or more,
And love them most dearly; but yet,
Though my heart they enthral, I'd abandon them all,
Did they act like your blooming coquette.

No longer repine, adopt this design,
And break through her slight-woven net;
Away with despair, no longer forbear
To fly from the captious coquette.

Then quit her, my friend! your bosom defend,
Ere quite with her snares you 're beset;
Lest your deep-wounded heart, when incensed by the smart,
Should lead you to curse the coquette.

October 27, 1806.

TO THE SIGHING STREPHON

Your pardon, my friend, if my rhymes did offend,
Your pardon, a thousand times o'er;
From friendship I strove your pangs to remove,
But I swear I will do so no more.

Since your beautiful maid your flame has repaid,
No more I your folly regret;
She 's now most divine, and I bow at the shrine
Of this quickly reformèd coquette.

Yet still, I must own, I should never have known
From your verses, what else she deserved;
Your pain seem'd so great, I pitied your fate,
As your fair was so devilish reserved.

Since the balm-breathing kiss of this magical miss
Can such wonderful transports produce;
Since the 'world you forget, when your lips once have met,'
My counsel will get but abuse.

You say, when 'I rove, I know nothing of love;'
'T is true, I am given to range:
If I rightly remember, I 've loved a good number,
Yet there 's pleasure, at least, in a change.

I will not advance, by the rules of romance,
To humour a whimsical fair;
Though a smile may delight, yet a frown won't affright,
Or drive me to dreadful despair.

While my blood is thus warm I ne'er shall reform,
To mix in the Platonists' school;
Of this I am sure, was my passion so pure,
Thy mistress would think me a fool.

And if I should shun every woman for one,
Whose image must fill my whole breast —
Whom I must prefer, and sigh but for her —
What an insult 't would be to the rest!

Now, Strephon, good bye; I cannot deny
Your passion appears most absurd;
Such love as you plead is pure love indeed,
For it only consists in the word.

TO ELIZA

[Miss Elizabeth Pigot.]

Eliza, what fools are the Mussulman sect,
Who to woman deny the soul's future existence;
Could they see thee, Eliza, they 'd own their defect,
And this doctrine would meet with a general resistance.

Had their prophet possess'd half an atom of sense,
He ne'er would have women from paradise driven;
Instead of his houris, a flimsy pretence,
With women alone he had peopled his heaven.

Yet still, to increase your calamities more,
Not content with depriving your bodies of spirit,
He allots one poor husband to share amongst four! —
With souls you 'd dispense, but this last who could bear it?

His religion to please neither party is made;
On husbands 't is hard, to the wives most uncivil;
Still I can't contradict, what so oft has been said,
'Though women are angels, yet wedlock 's the devil.'

This terrible truth even Scripture has told,
Ye Benedicks! hear me, and listen with rapture;
If a glimpse of redemption you wish to behold,
Of St. Matt. read the second and twentieth chapter.

'T is surely enough upon earth to be vex'd
With wives who eternal confusion are spreading;
'But in Heaven' (so runs the Evangelist's Text)
'We neither have giving in marriage, or wedding.'

From this we suppose (as indeed well we may),
That should Saints after death with their spouses put up more,
And wives, as in life, aim at absolute sway,
All Heaven would ring with the conjugal uproar.

Distraction and discord would follow in course,
Nor Matthew nor Mark nor St. Paul can deny it,
The only expedient is general divorce,
To prevent universal disturbance and riot.

But though husband and wife shall at length be disjoin'd,
Yet woman and man ne'er were meant to dissever;
Our chains once dissolved and our hearts unconfined,
We 'll love without bonds, but we 'll love you for ever.

Though souls are denied you by fools and by rakes,
Should you own it yourselves, I would even then doubt you;
Your nature so much of *celestial* partakes,
The Garden of Eden would wither without you.

SOUTHWELL, *October* 9, 1806.

LACHIN Y GAIR

AWAY, ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of roses!
In you let the minions of luxury rove;
Restore me the rocks where the snow-flake reposes,
Though still they are sacred to freedom and love.
Yet, Caledonia, beloved are thy mountains,
Round their white summits though elements war;
Though cataracts foam 'stead of smooth-flowing fountains,
I sigh for the valley of dark Loch na Garr.

Ah! there my young footsteps in infancy wander'd;
My cap was the bonnet, my cloak was the plaid;
On chieftains long perish'd my memory ponder'd,
As daily I strode through the pine-cover'd glade:
I sought not my home till the day's dying glory
Gave place to the rays of the bright polar star;
For fancy was cheer'd by traditional story,
Disclosed by the natives of dark Loch na Garr.

'Shades of the dead! have I not heard your voices
Rise on the night-rolling breath of the gale?'
Surely the soul of the hero rejoices,
And rides on the wind, o'er his own Highland vale.
Round Loch na Garr while the stormy mist gathers,
Winter presides in his cold icy car:
Clouds there encircle the forms of my fathers;
They dwell in the tempests of dark Loch na Garr.

'Ill-starr'd, though brave, did no visions foreboding
Tell you that fate had forsaken your cause?'
Ah! were you destined to die at Culloden,
Victory crown'd not your fall with applause:
Still were you happy in death's earthy slumber,
You rest with your clan in the caves of Braemar;

The pibroch resounds, to the piper's loud number,
Your deeds on the echoes of dark Loch na Garr.

Years have roll'd on, Loch na Garr, since I left you,
Years must elapse ere I tread you again:
Nature of verdure and flow'rs has bereft you,
Yet still are you dearer than Albion's plain.
England! thy beauties are tame and domestic
To one who has roved on the mountains afar:
Oh for the crags that are wild and majestic!
The steep frowning glories of dark Loch na Garr!

TO ROMANCE

Parent of golden dreams, Romance!
Auspicious queen of childish joys,
Who lead'st along, in airy dance,
Thy votive train of girls and boys;
At length, in spells no longer bound,
I break the fetters of my youth;
No more I tread thy mystic round,
But leave thy realms for those of Truth.

And yet 't is hard to quit the dreams
Which haunt the unsuspicious soul,
Where every nymph a goddess seems,
Whose eyes through rays immortal roll;
While Fancy holds her boundless reign,
And all assume a varied hue;
When virgins seem no longer vain,
And even woman's smiles are true.

And must we own thee but a name,
And from thy hall of clouds descend?
Nor find a sylph in every dame,
A Pylades in every friend?
But leave at once thy realms of air
To mingling bands of fairy elves;
Confess that woman 's false as fair,
And friends have feeling for — themselves?

With shame I own I 've felt thy sway,
Repentant, now thy reign is o'er;
No more thy precepts I obey,
No more on fancied pinions soar.
Fond fool! to love a sparkling eye,
And think that eye to truth was dear;
To trust a passing wanton's sigh,
And melt beneath a wanton's tear!

Romance! disgusted with deceit,
Far from thy motley court I fly,
Where Affectation holds her seat,
And sickly Sensibility;
Whose silly tears can never flow
For any pangs excepting thine;
Who turns aside from real woe,
To steep in dew thy gaudy shrine.

Now join with sable Sympathy,
With cypress crown'd, array'd in weeds,
Who heaves with thee her simple sigh,
Whose breast for every bosom bleeds;
And call thy sylvan female choir,
To mourn a swain for ever gone,
Who once could glow with equal fire,
But bends not now before thy throne.

Ye genial nymphs, whose ready tears
On all occasions swiftly flow,
Whose bosoms heave with fancied fears,
With fancied flames and phrensy glow;
Say, will you mourn my absent name,
Apostate from your gentle train?
An infant bard at least may claim
From you a sympathetic strain.

Adieu, fond race! a long adieu!
The hour of fate is hovering nigh;
E'en now the gulf appears in view,
Where unlamented you must lie:
Oblivion's blackening lake is seen,
Convulsed by gales you cannot weather;
Where you, and eke your gentle queen,
Alas! must perish altogether.

ANSWER TO SOME ELEGANT VERSES

SENT BY A FRIEND TO THE AUTHOR, COMPLAINING THAT ONE OF HIS DESCRIPTIONS WAS RATHER TOO WARMLY DRAWN

'But if any old lady, knight, priest, or physician,
Should condemn me for printing a second edition;
If good Madam Squintum my work should abuse,
May I venture to give her a smack of my muse?'
Anstey, *New Bath Guide*.

Candour compels me, Becher! to commend
The verse which blends the censor with the friend.

Your strong yet just reproof extorts applause
From me, the heedless and imprudent cause.
For this wild error which pervades my strain,
I sue for pardon, — must I sue in vain?
The wise sometimes from Wisdom's ways depart:
Can youth then hush the dictates of the heart?
Precepts of prudence curb, but can't control,
The fierce emotions of the flowing soul.
When Love's delirium haunts the glowing mind,
Limping Decorum lingers far behind:
Vainly the dotard mends her prudish pace,
Outstript and vanquish'd in the mental chase.
The young, the old, have worn the chains of love;
Let those they ne'er confined my lay reprove:
Let those whose souls contemn the pleasing power
Their censures on the hapless victim shower.
Oh! how I hate the nerveless, frigid song,
The ceaseless echo of the rhyming throng,
Whose labour'd lines in chilling numbers flow,
To paint a pang the author ne'er can know!
The artless Helicon I boast is youth; —
My lyre, the heart; my muse, the simple truth.
Far be 't from me the 'virgin's mind' to 'taint:'
Seduction's dread is here no slight restraint.
The maid whose virgin breast is void of guile,
Whose wishes dimple in a modest smile,
Whose downcast eye disdains the wanton leer,
Firm in her virtue's strength, yet not severe —
She whom a conscious grace shall thus refine
Will ne'er be 'tainted' by a strain of mine.
But for the nymph whose premature desires
Torment her bosom with unholy fires,
No net to snare her willing heart is spread;
She would have fallen, though she ne'er had read.
For me, I fain would please the chosen few,
Whose souls, to feeling and to nature true,
Will spare the childish verse, and not destroy
The light effusions of a heedless boy.
I seek not glory from the senseless crowd;
Of fancied laurels I shall ne'er be proud:
Their warmest plaudits I would scarcely prize,
Their sneers or censures I alike despise.

November 26, 1806.

ELEGY ON NEWSTEAD ABBEY

'It is the voice of years that are gone! they roll before me with all their deeds.' — OSSIAN.

NEWSTEAD! fast-falling, once-resplendent dome!
Religion's shrine! repentant HENRY'S pride!
Of warriors, monks, and dames the cloister'd tomb,
Whose pensive shades around thy ruins glide,

Hail to thy pile! more honour'd in thy fall
Than modern mansions in their pillar'd state;
Proudly majestic frowns thy vaulted hall,
Scowling defiance on the blasts of fate.

No mail-clad serfs, obedient to their lord,
In grim array the crimson cross demand;
Or gay assemble round the festive board
Their chief's retainers, an immortal band:

Else might inspiring Fancy's magic eye
Retrace their progress through the lapse of time,
Marking each ardent youth, ordain'd to die,
A votive pilgrim in Judea's clime.

But not from thee, dark pile! departs the chief;
His feudal realm in other regions lay:

In thee the wounded conscience courts relief,
Retiring from the garish blaze of day.

Yes! in thy gloomy cells and shades profound
The monk abjured a world he ne'er could view;
Or blood-stain'd guilt repenting solace found,
Or innocence from stern oppression flew.

A monarch bade thee from that wild arise,
Where Sherwood's outlaws once were wont to prowl;
And Superstition's crimes, of various dyes,
Sought shelter in the priest's protecting cowl.

Where now the grass exhales a murky dew,
The humid pall of life-extinguish'd clay,
In sainted fame the sacred fathers grew,
Nor raised their pious voices but to pray.

Where now the bats their wavering wings extend
Soon as the gloaming spreads her waning shade,
The choir did oft their mingling vespers blend,
Or matin orisons to Mary paid.

Years roll on years; to ages, ages yield;
Abbots to abbots, in a line, succeed:
Religion's charter their protecting shield
Till royal sacrilege their doom decreed.

One holy Henry rear'd the Gothic walls,
And bade the pious inmates rest in peace;
Another Henry the kind gift recalls,
And bids devotion's hallow'd echoes cease.

Vain is each threat or supplicating prayer;
He drives them exiles from their blest abode,
To roam a dreary world in deep despair—
No friend, no home, no refuge, but their God.

Hark how the hall, resounding to the strain,
Shakes with the martial music's novel din!
The heralds of a warrior's haughty reign,
High crested banners wave thy walls within.

Of changing sentinels the distant hum,
The mirth of feasts, the clang of burnish'd arms,
The braying trumpet and the hoarser drum,
Unite in concert with increased alarms.

An abbey once, a regal fortress now,
Encircled by insulting rebel powers,
War's dread machines o'erhang thy threatening brow,
And dart destruction in sulphureous showers.

Ah, vain defence! the hostile traitor's siege,
Though oft repulsed, by guile o'ercomes the brave;
His thronging foes oppress the faithful liege,
Rebellion's reeking standards o'er him wave.

Not unavenged the raging baron yields;
The blood of traitors smears the purple plain;
Unconquer'd still, his falchion there he wields,
And days of glory yet for him remain.

Still in that hour the warrior wish'd to strew
Self-gather'd laurels on a self-sought grave;
But Charles' protecting genius hither flew,
The monarch's friend, the monarch's hope, to save.

Trembling, she snatch'd him from th' unequal strife,
In other fields the torrent to repel;
For nobler combats, here, reserved his life,
To lead the band where godlike Falkland fell.

From thee, poor pile! to lawless plunder given,
While dying groans their painful requiem sound,
Far different incense now ascends to heaven,
Such victims wallow on the gory ground.

There many a pale and ruthless robber's corse,
Noisome and ghast, defiles thy sacred sod;
O'er mingling man, and horse commix'd with horse,
Corruption's heap, the savage spoilers trod.

Graves, long with rank and sighing weeds o'erspread,
Ransack'd, resign perforce their mortal mould:
From ruffian fangs escape not e'en the dead,
Raked from repose in search for buried gold.

Hush'd is the harp, unstrung the warlike lyre,
The minstrel's palsied hand reclines in death;
No more he strikes the quivering chords with fire,
Or sings the glories of the martial wreath.

At length the sated murderers, gorged with prey,
Retire; the clamour of the fight is o'er;
Silence again resumes her awful sway,
And sable Horror guards the massy door.

Here Desolation holds her dreary court:
What satellites declare her dismal reign!
Shrieking their dirge, ill-omen'd birds resort,
To flit their vigils in the hoary fane.

Soon a new morn's restoring beams dispel
The clouds of anarchy from Britain's skies;
The fierce usurper seeks his native hell,
And Nature triumphs as the tyrant dies.

With storms she welcomes his expiring groans;
Whirlwinds, responsive, greet his labouring breath;
Earth shudders as her caves receive his bones,
Loathing the offering of so dark a death.

The legal ruler now resumes the helm,
He guides through gentle seas the prow of state;
Hope cheers with wonted smiles the peaceful realm,
And heals the bleeding wounds of wearied hate.

The gloomy tenants, Newstead! of thy cells,
Howling, resign their violated nest;
Again the master on his tenure dwells,
Enjoy'd, from absence, with enraptured zest.

Vassals, within thy hospitable pale,
Loudly carousing, bless their lord's return;
Culture again adorns the gladdening vale,
And matrons, once lamenting, cease to mourn.

A thousand songs on tuneful echo float,
Unwonted foliage mantles o'er the trees;
And hark! the horns proclaim a mellow note,
The hunters' cry hangs lengthening on the breeze.

Beneath their coursers' hoofs the valleys shake:
What fears, what anxious hopes, attend the chase!
The dying stag seeks refuge in the Lake;
Exulting shouts announce the finish'd race.

Ah happy days! too happy to endure!
Such simple sports our plain forefathers knew:
No splendid vices glitter'd to allure;
Their joys were many, as their cares were few.

From these descending, sons to sires succeed;
Time steals along, and Death uprears his dart;
Another chief impels the foaming steed,
Another crowd pursue the panting hart.

Newstead! what saddening change of scene is thine!
Thy yawning arch betokens slow decay;
The last and youngest of a noble line
Now holds thy mouldering turrets in his sway.

Deserted now, he scans thy gray worn towers;
Thy vaults where dead of feudal ages sleep;
Thy cloisters, pervious to the wintry showers;
These, these he views, and views them but to weep.

Yet are his tears no emblem of regret:
Cherish'd affection only bids them flow;
Pride, hope, and love forbid him to forget,
But warm his bosom with impassion'd glow.

Yet he prefers thee to the gilded domes
Or gewgaw grottos of the vainly great;
Yet lingers 'mid thy damp and mossy tombs,
Nor breathes a murmur 'gainst the will of fate.

Haply thy sun, emerging, yet may shine,
Thee to irradiate with meridian ray;
Hours splendid as the past may still be thine,
And bless thy future as thy former day.

CHILDISH RECOLLECTIONS

'I cannot but remember such things were,
And were most dear to me.' — *Macbeth*.

When slow Disease, with all her host of pains,
Chills the warm tide which flows along the veins;
When Health, affrighted, spreads her rosy wing,
And flies with every changing gale of spring;
Not to the aching frame alone confined,
Unyielding pangs assail the drooping mind:
What grisly forms, the spectre-train of woe,
Bid shuddering Nature shrink beneath the blow,
With Resignation wage relentless strife,
While Hope retires appall'd, and clings to life.
Yet less the pang when, through the tedious hour,
Remembrance sheds around her genial power,
Calls back the vanish'd days to rapture given,
When love was bliss, and Beauty form'd our heaven;
Or, dear to youth, portrays each childish scene,
Those fairy bowers, where all in turn have been.
As when through clouds that pour the summer storm
The orb of day unveils his distant form,
Gilds with faint beams the crystal dews of rain,
And dimly twinkles o'er the watery plain;
Thus, while the future dark and cheerless gleams,
The sun of memory, glowing through my dreams,
Though sunk the radiance of his former blaze,
To scenes far distant points his paler rays;
Still rules my senses with unbounded sway,
The past confounding with the present day.

Oft does my heart indulge the rising thought,
Which still recurs, unlook'd for and unsought;
My soul to Fancy's fond suggestion yields,
And roams romantic o'er her airy fields.
Scenes of my youth, developed, crowd to view,
To which I long have bade a last adieu!
Seats of delight, inspiring youthful themes;
Friends lost to me for aye, except in dreams;
Some who in marble prematurely sleep,
Whose forms I now remember but to weep;
Some who yet urge the same scholastic course
Of early science, future fame the source;
Who, still contending in the studious race,
In quick rotation fill the senior place.
These with a thousand visions now unite,
To dazzle, though they please, my aching sight.

Ida! blest spot, where Science holds her reign,
How joyous once I join'd thy youthful train!
Bright in idea gleams thy lofty spire,
Again I mingle with thy playful quire;
Our tricks of mischief, every childish game,
Unchanged by time or distance, seem the same;
Through winding paths along the glade, I trace

The social smile of every welcome face;
My wonted haunts, my scenes of joy and woe,
Each early boyish friend, or youthful foe,
Our feuds dissolved, but not my friendship past: —
I bless the former, and forgive the last.
Hours of my youth! when, nurtured in my breast,
To love a stranger, friendship made me blest; —
Friendship, the dear peculiar bond of youth,
When every artless bosom throbs with truth,
Untaught by worldly wisdom how to feign
And check each impulse with prudential rein;
When all we feel, our honest souls disclose —
In love to friends, in open hate to foes;
No varnish'd tales the lips of youth repeat,
No dear-bought knowledge purchased by deceit.
Hypocrisy, the gift of lengthen'd years,
Matured by age, the garb of prudence wears.
When now the boy is ripen'd into man,
His careful sire chalks forth some wary plan;
Instructs his son from candour's path to shrink,
Smoothly to speak, and cautiously to think;
Still to assent, and never to deny —
A patron's praise can well reward the lie:
And who, when Fortune's warning voice is heard,
Would lose his opening prospects for a word?
Although against that word his heart rebel,
And truth indignant all his bosom swell.

Away with themes like this! not mine the task
From flattering friends to tear the hateful mask;
Let keener bards delight in satire's sting,
My fancy soars not on Detraction's wing:
Once, and but once, she aim'd a deadly blow,
To hurl defiance on a secret foe;
But when that foe, from feeling or from shame,
The cause unknown, yet still to me the same,
Warn'd by some friendly hint, perchance, retired,
With this submission all her rage expired.
From dreaded pangs that feeble foe to save,
She hush'd her young resentment, and forgave;
Or, if my muse a pedant's portrait drew,
Pomposus' virtues are but known to few:
I never fear'd the young usurper's nod,
And he who wields must sometimes feel the rod.
If since on Granta's failings, known to all
Who share the converse of a college hall,
She sometimes trifled in a lighter strain,
'T is past, and thus she will not sin again,
Soon must her early song for ever cease,
And all may rail when I shall rest in peace.

Here first remember'd be the joyous band,
Who hail'd me chief, obedient to command;
Who join'd with me in every boyish sport—
Their first adviser, and their last resort;
Nor shrunk beneath the upstart pedant's frown,
Or all the sable glories of his gown;
Who, thus transplanted from his father's school —
Unfit to govern, ignorant of rule —
Succeeded him, whom all unite to praise,
The dear preceptor of my early days,
Probus, the pride of science, and the boast,
To Ida now, alas! for ever lost.
With him, for years, we search'd the classic page,
And fear'd the master, though we loved the sage:
Retired at last, his small yet peaceful seat
From learning's labour is the blest retreat.
Pomposus fills his magisterial chair;
Pomposus governs, — but, my muse, forbear:
Contempt, in silence, be the pedant's lot;
His name and precepts be alike forgot;
No more his mention shall my verse degrade, —
To him my tribute is already paid.

High, through those elms, with hoary branches crown'd,
Fair Ida's bower adorns the landscape round;
There Science, from her favour'd seat, surveys
The vale where rural Nature claims her praise;
To her awhile resigns her youthful train,
Who move in joy, and dance along the plain;

In scatter'd groups each favour'd haunt pursue;
Repeat old pastimes and discover new;
Flush'd with his rays, beneath the noontide sun
In rival bands between the wickets run, 130
Drive o'er the sward the ball with active force,
Or chase with nimble feet its rapid course.
But these with slower steps direct their way
Where Brent's cool waves in limpid currents stray;
While yonder few search out some green retreat,
And arbours shade them from the summer heat.
Others, again, a pert and lively crew,
Some rough and thoughtless stranger placed in view,
With frolic quaint their antic jests expose,
And tease the grumbling rustic as he goes;
Nor rest with this, but many a passing fray
Tradition treasures for a future day: 142
''T was here the gather'd swains for vengeance fought,
And here we earn'd the conquest dearly bought;
Here have we fled before superior might,
And here renew'd the wild tumultuous fight.'
While thus our souls with early passions swell,
In lingering tones resounds the distant bell;
Th' allotted hour of daily sport is o'er,
And Learning beckons from her temple's door. 150
No splendid tablets grace her simple hall,
But ruder records fill the dusky wall;
There, deeply carved, behold! each tyro's name
Secures its owner's academic fame;
Here mingling view the names of sire and son —
The one long graved, the other just begun.
These shall survive alike when son and sire
Beneath one common stroke of fate expire:
Perhaps their last memorial these alone,
Denied in death a monumental stone, 160
Whilst to the gale in mournful cadence wave
The sighing weeds that hide their nameless grave.
And here my name, and many an early friend's,
Along the wall in lengthen'd line extends.
Though still our deeds amuse the youthful race,
Who tread our steps and fill our former place,
Who young obey'd their lords in silent awe,
Whose nod commanded and whose voice was law;
And now, in turn, possess the reins of power,
To rule the little tyrants of an hour;— 170
Though sometimes with the tales of ancient day
They pass the dreary winter's eve away —
'And thus our former rulers stemm'd the tide,
And thus they dealt the combat side by side;
Just in this place the mouldering walls they scaled,
Nor bolts nor bars against their strength avail'd;
Here Probus came, the rising fray to quell,
And here he falter'd forth his last farewell;
And here one night abroad they dared to roam,
While bold Pomposus bravely stay'd at home;' 180
While thus they speak, the hour must soon arrive,
When names of these, like ours, alone survive:
Yet a few years, one general wreck will whelm
The faint remembrance of our fairy realm.

Dear honest race! though now we meet no more,
One last long look on what we were before —
Our first kind greetings, and our last adieu —
Drew tears from eyes unused to weep with you.
Through splendid circles, fashion's gaudy world,
Where folly's glaring standard waves unfurl'd, 190
I plunged to drown in noise my fond regret,
And all I sought or hoped was to forget.
Vain wish! if chance some well-remember'd face,
Some old companion of my early race,
Advanced to claim his friend with honest joy,

My eyes, my heart, proclaim'd me still a boy.
The glittering scene, the fluttering groups around,
Were quite forgotten when my friend was found;
The smiles of beauty (for, alas! I 've known
What 't is to bend before Love's mighty throne) —
The smiles of beauty, though those smiles were dear,
Could hardly charm me, when that friend was near:
My thoughts bewilder'd in the fond surprise,
The woods of Ida danced before my eyes;
I saw the sprightly wand'rers pour along,
I saw and join'd again the joyous throng;
Panting, again I traced her lofty grove,
And friendship's feelings triumphed over love.

Yet, why should I alone with such delight
Retrace the circuit of my former flight?
Is there no cause beyond the common claim
Endear'd to all in childhood's very name?
Ah! sure some stronger impulse vibrates here,
Which whispers friendship will be doubly dear
To one, who thus for kindred hearts must roam
And seek abroad the love denied at home.
Those hearts, dear Ida, have I found in thee —
A home, a world, a paradise to me.
Stern Death forbade my orphan youth to share
The tender guidance of a father's care.
Can rank, or e'en a guardian's name, supply
The love which glistens in a father's eye?
For this can wealth or title's sound atone,
Made, by a parent's early loss, my own?
What brother springs a brother's love to seek?
What sister's gentle kiss has prest my cheek?
For me how dull the vacant moments rise,
To no fond bosom link'd by kindred ties!
Oft in the progress of some fleeting dream
Fraternal smiles collected round me seem;
While still the visions to my heart are prest,
The voice of love will murmur in my rest:
I hear — I wake — and in the sound rejoice;
I hear again, — but ah! no brother's voice.
A hermit, 'midst of crowds, I fain must stay
Alone, though thousand pilgrims fill the way;
While these a thousand kindred wreaths entwine,
I cannot call one single blossom mine:
What then remains? in solitude to groan,
To mix in friendship, or to sigh alone.
Thus must I cling to some endearing hand,
And none more dear than Ida's social band.

Alonzo! best and dearest of my friends,
Thy name ennobles him who thus commends:
From this fond tribute thou canst gain no praise,
The praise is his who now that tribute pays.
Oh! in the promise of thy early youth,
If hope anticipate the words of truth,
Some loftier bard shall sing thy glorious name,
To build his own upon thy deathless fame.
Friend of my heart, and foremost of the list
Of those with whom I lived supremely blest,
Oft have we drain'd the font of ancient lore,
Though drinking deeply, thirsting still the more.
Yet, when confinement's lingering hour was done,
Our sports, our studies, and our souls were one:
Together we impell'd the flying ball;
Together waited in our tutor's hall;
Together join'd in cricket's manly toil,
Or shared the produce of the river's spoil;
Or, plunging from the green declining shore,
Our pliant limbs the buoyant billows bore;
In every element, unchanged, the same,
All, all that brothers should be, but the name.

Nor yet are you forgot, my jocund boy!
Davus, the harbinger of childish joy;
For ever foremost in the ranks of fun,
The laughing herald of the harmless pun;
Yet with a breast of such materials made —
Anxious to please, of pleasing half afraid;

Candid and liberal, with a heart of steel
In danger's path, though not untaught to feel.
Still I remember, in the factious strife,
The rustic's musket aim'd against my life:
High poised in air the massy weapon hung,
A cry of horror burst from every tongue;
Whilst I, in combat with another foe,
Fought on, unconscious of th' impending blow;
Your arm, brave boy, arrested his career —
Forward you sprung, insensible to fear;
Disarm'd and baffled by your conquering hand,
The grovelling savage roll'd upon the sand.
An act like this, can simple thanks repay?
Or all the labours of a grateful lay?
Oh no! whene'er my breast forgets the deed,
That instant, Davus, it deserves to bleed.

Lycus! on me thy claims are justly great:
Thy milder virtues could my muse relate,
To thee alone, unrivall'd, would belong
The feeble efforts of my lengthen'd song.
Well canst thou boast, to lead in senates fit,
A Spartan firmness with Athenian wit:
Though yet in embryo these perfections shine,
Lycus! thy father's fame will soon be thine.
Where learning nurtures the superior mind,
What may we hope from genius thus refined!
When time at length matures thy growing years,
How wilt thou tower above thy fellow peers!
Prudence and sense, a spirit bold and free,
With honour's soul, united beam in thee.

Shall fair Euryalus pass by unsung,
From ancient lineage, not unworthy, sprung?
What though one sad dissension bade us part,
Thy name is yet embalm'd within my heart;
Yet at the mention does that heart rebound,
And palpitate, responsive to the sound.
Envy dissolved our ties, and not our will:
We once were friends, — I 'll think we are so still.
A form unmatch'd in nature's partial mould,
A heart untainted, we in thee behold:
Yet not the senate's thunder thou shalt wield,
Nor seek for glory in the tented field;
To minds of ruder texture these be given —
Thy soul shall nearer soar its native heaven.
Haply, in polish'd courts might be thy seat,
But that thy tongue could never forge deceit:
The courtier's supple bow and sneering smile,
The flow of compliment, the slippery wile,
Would make that breast with indignation burn,
And all the glittering snares to tempt thee spurn.
Domestic happiness will stamp thy fate;
Sacred to love, unclouded e'er by hate;
The world admire thee, and thy friends adore; —
Ambition's slave alone would toil for more.

Now last, but nearest, of the social band,
See honest, open, generous Cleon stand;
With scarce one speck to cloud the pleasing scene,
No vice degrades that purest soul serene.
On the same day our studious race begun,
On the same day our studious race was run;
Thus side by side we pass'd our first career,
Thus side by side we strove for many a year.
At last, concluded our scholastic life,
We neither conquer'd in the classic strife:
As speakers each supports an equal name,
And crowds allow to both a partial fame:
To soothe a youthful rival's early pride
Though Cleon's candour would the palm divide,
Yet candour's self compels me now to own
Justice awards it to my friend alone.

Oh! friends regretted, scenes for ever dear,
Remembrance hails you with her warmest tear!
Drooping, she bends o'er pensive Fancy's urn,
To trace the hours which never can return;
Yet with the retrospection loves to dwell,
And soothe the sorrows of her last farewell!
Yet greets the triumph of my boyish mind,
As infant laurels round my head were twined,

When Probus' praise repaid my lyric song,
Or placed me higher in the studious throng;
Or when my first harangue received applause,
His sage instruction the primeval cause,
What gratitude to him my soul possest,
While hope of dawning honours fill'd my breast!
For all my humble fame, to him alone
The praise is due, who made that fame my own.
Oh! could I soar above these feeble lays,
These young effusions of my early days,
To him my muse her noblest strain would give:
The song might perish, but the theme might live.
Yet why for him the needless verse essay?
His honour'd name requires no vain display:
By every son of grateful Ida blest,
It finds an echo in each youthful breast;
A fame beyond the glories of the proud,
Or all the plaudits of the venal crowd.

Ida! not yet exhausted is the theme,
Nor closed the progress of my youthful dream.
How many a friend deserves the grateful strain!
What scenes of childhood still unsung remain!
Yet let me hush this echo of the past,
This parting song, the dearest and the last;
And brood in secret o'er those hours of joy,
To me a silent and a sweet employ,
While future hope and fear alike unknown,
I think with pleasure on the past alone;
Yes, to the past alone my heart confine,
And chase the phantom of what once was mine.

Ida! still o'er thy hills in joy preside,
And proudly steer through time's eventful tide;
Still may thy blooming sons thy name revere,
Smile in thy bower, but quit thee with a tear;—
That tear, perhaps, the fondest which will flow,
O'er their last scene of happiness below.
Tell me, ye hoary few, who glide along,
The feeble veterans of some former throng,
Whose friends, like autumn leaves by tempests whirl'd,
Are swept for ever from this busy world;
Revolve the fleeting moments of your youth,
While Care as yet withheld her venom'd tooth;
Say, if remembrance days like these endears
Beyond the rapture of succeeding years?
Say, can ambition's fever'd dream bestow
So sweet a balm to soothe your hours of woe?
Can treasures, hoarded for some thankless son,
Can royal smiles, or wreaths by slaughter won,
Can stars or ermine, man's maturer toys
(For glittering baubles are not left to boys),
Recall one scene so much beloved to view,
As those where Youth her garland twined for you?
Ah, no! amidst the gloomy calm of age
You turn with faltering hand life's varied page;
Peruse the record of your days on earth,
Unsullied only where it marks your birth;
Still lingering pause above each checker'd leaf,
And blot with tears the sable lines of grief,
Where Passion o'er the theme her mantle threw,
Or weeping Virtue sigh'd a faint adieu;
But bless the scroll which fairer words adorn,
Traced by the rosy finger of the morn,
When Friendship bow'd before the shrine of truth,
And Love, without his pinion, smiled on youth.

ANSWER TO A BEAUTIFUL POEM, ENTITLED 'THE COMMON LOT'

[By James Montgomery, author of *The Wanderer in Switzerland.*]

Montgomery! true, the common lot
 Of mortals lies in Lethe's wave;
Yet some shall never be forgot,
 Some shall exist beyond the grave.

'Unknown the region of his birth,'
 The hero rolls the tide of war;

Yet not unknown his martial worth,
  Which glares a meteor from afar.

His joy or grief, his weal or woe,
  Perchance may 'scape the page of fame;
Yet nations now unborn will know
  The record of his deathless name.

The patriot's and the poet's frame
  Must share the common tomb of all:
Their glory will not sleep the same;
  That will arise, though empires fall.

The lustre of a beauty's eye
  Assumes the ghastly stare of death;
The fair, the brave, the good must die,
  And sink the yawning grave beneath.

Once more the speaking eye revives,
  Still beaming through the lover's strain;
For Petrarch's Laura still survives:
  She died, but ne'er will die again.

The rolling seasons pass away,
  And Time, untiring, waves his wing;
Whilst honour's laurels ne'er decay,
  But bloom in fresh, unfading spring.

All, all must sleep in grim repose,
  Collected in the silent tomb;
The old and young, with friends and foes,
  Festering alike in shrouds, consume.

The mouldering marble lasts its day,
  Yet falls at length an useless fane;
To ruin's ruthless fangs a prey,
  The wrecks of pillar'd pride remain.

What, though the sculpture be destroy'd,
  From dark oblivion meant to guard;
A bright renown shall be enjoy'd
  By those whose virtues claim reward.

Then do not say the common lot
  Of all lies deep in Lethe's wave;
Some few who ne'er will be forgot
  Shall burst the bondage of the grave.
    1806.

REMEMBRANCE

'Tis done! — I saw it in my dreams:
No more with Hope the future beams,
  My days of happiness are few;
Chill'd by misfortune's wintry blast,
My dawn of life is overcast,
  Love, Hope, and Joy, alike adieu! —
  Would I could add Remembrance too!
    1806.

TO A LADY

WHO PRESENTED THE AUTHOR WITH THE VELVET BAND WHICH BOUND HER TRESSES

This Band, which bound thy yellow hair,
  Is mine, sweet girl! thy pledge of love;
It claims my warmest, dearest care,
  Like relics left of saints above.

Oh! I will wear it next my heart;
  'T will bind my soul in bonds to thee;
From me again 't will ne'er depart,
  But mingle in the grave with me.

The dew I gather from thy lip
  Is not so dear to me as this;
That I but for a moment sip,
  And banquet on a transient bliss:

This will recall each youthful scene,
  E'en when our lives are on the wane;
The leaves of Love will still be green
  When Memory bids them bud again.

Oh! little lock of golden hue,
  In gently waving ringlet curl'd,
By the dear head on which you grew,
  I would not lose you for a world.

Not though a thousand more adorn
  The polish'd brow where once you shone,
Like rays which gild a cloudless morn,
  Beneath Columbia's fervid zone.
    1806.

LINES

ADDRESSED TO THE REV. J. T. BECHER, ON HIS ADVISING THE AUTHOR TO MIX MORE WITH SOCIETY

Dear Becher, you tell me to mix with mankind;
  I cannot deny such a precept is wise;
But retirement accords with the tone of my mind,
  I will not descend to a world I despise.

Did the senate or camp my exertions require,
Ambition might prompt me at once to go forth;
When infancy's years of probation expire,
Perchance I may strive to distinguish my birth.

The fire in the cavern of Etna conceal'd,
Still mantles unseen in its secret recess;
At length, in a volume terrific reveal'd,
No torrent can quench it, no bounds can repress.

Oh! thus, the desire in my bosom for fame
Bids me live but to hope for posterity's praise:
Could I soar with the phœnix on pinions of flame,
With him I would wish to expire in the blaze.

For the life of a Fox, of a Chatham the death,
What censure, what danger, what woe would I brave!
Their lives did not end when they yielded their breath,
Their glory illumines the gloom of their grave.

Yet why should I mingle in Fashion's full herd?
Why crouch to her leaders, or cringe to her rules?
Why bend to the proud, or applaud the absurd?
Why search for delight in the friendship of fools?

I have tasted the sweets and the bitters of love;
In friendship I early was taught to believe;
My passion the matrons of prudence reprove;
I have found that a friend may profess, yet deceive.

To me what is wealth?—it may pass in an hour,
If tyrants prevail or if Fortune should frown;
To me what is title?—the phantom of power;
To me what is fashion?—I seek but renown.

Deceit is a stranger as yet to my soul,
I still am unpractised to varnish the truth:
Then why should I live in a hateful control?
Why waste upon folly the days of my youth?

1806.

THE DEATH OF CALMAR AND ORLA

AN IMITATION OF MACPHERSON'S OSSIAN

[Byron states that the story of this Imitation, 'though considerably varied in the catastrophe, is taken from "Nisus and Euryalus."' Like Goethe and others of the period, Byron was an admirer of Ossian, although he was early acquainted with the true nature of these rhapsodies.]

Dear are the days of youth! Age dwells on their remembrance through the mist of time. In the twilight he recalls the sunny hours of morn. He lifts his spear with trembling hand. 'Not thus feebly did I raise the steel before my fathers!' Past is the race of heroes! But their fame rises on the harp; their souls ride on the wings of the wind; they hear the sound through the sighs of the storm, and rejoice in their hall of clouds! Such is Calmar. The gray stone marks his narrow house. He looks down from eddying tempests: he rolls his form in the whirlwind, and hovers on the blast of the mountain.

In Morven dwelt the chief, a beam of war to Fingal. His steps in the field were marked in blood. Lochlin's sons had fled before his angry spear: but mild was the eye of Calmar; soft was the flow of his yellow locks: they streamed like the meteor of the night. No maid was the sigh of his soul: his thoughts were given to friendship,—to dark-haired Orla, destroyer of heroes! Equal were their swords in battle; but fierce was the pride of Orla:—gentle alone to Calmar. Together they dwelt in the cave of Oithona.

From Lochlin, Swaran bounded o'er the

blue waves. Erin's sons fell beneath his might. Fingal roused his chiefs to combat. Their ships cover the ocean. Their hosts throng on the green hills. They come to the aid of Erin.

Night rose in clouds. Darkness veils the armies: but the blazing oaks gleam through the valley. The sons of Lochlin slept: their dreams were of blood. They lift the spear in thought, and Fingal flies. Not so the host of Morven. To watch was the post of Orla. Calmar stood by his side. Their spears were in their hands. Fingal called his chiefs: they stood around. The king was in the midst. Gray were his locks, but strong was the arm of the king. Age withered not his powers. 'Sons of Morven,' said the hero, 'to-morrow we meet the foe. But where is Cuthullin, the shield of Erin? He rests in the halls of Tura; he knows not of our coming. Who will speed through Lochlin to the hero, and call the chief to arms? The path is by the swords of foes; but many are my heroes. They are thunderbolts of war. Speak, ye chiefs! Who will arise?'

'Son of Trenmor! mine be the deed,' said dark-haired Orla, 'and mine alone. What is death to me? I love the sleep of the mighty, but little is the danger. The sons of Lochlin dream. I will seek car-borne Cuthullin. If I fall, raise the song of bards; and lay me by the stream of Lubar.'—'And shalt thou fall alone?' said fair-haired Calmar. 'Wilt thou leave thy friend afar? Chief of Oithona! not feeble is my arm in fight. Could I see thee die, and not lift the spear? No, Orla! ours has been the chase of the roebuck, and the feast of shells; ours be the path of danger: ours has been the cave of Oithona; ours be the narrow dwelling on the banks of Lubar.'—'Calmar,' said the chief of Oithona, 'why should thy yellow locks be darkened in the dust of Erin? Let me fall alone. My father dwells in his hall of air: he will rejoice in his boy; but the blue-eyed Mora spreads the feast for her son in Morven. She listens to the steps of the hunter on the heath, and thinks it is the tread of Calmar. Let her not say, "Calmar has fallen by the steel of Lochlin: he died with gloomy Orla, the chief of the dark brow." Why should tears dim the azure eye of Mora? Why should her voice curse Orla, the destroyer of Calmar? Live, Calmar! Live to raise my stone of moss; live to revenge me in the blood of Lochlin. Join the song of bards above my grave. Sweet will be the song of death to Orla, from the voice of Calmar. My ghost shall smile on the notes of praise.'—'Orla,' said the son of Mora, 'could I raise the song of death to my friend? Could I give his fame to the winds? No, my heart would speak in sighs: faint and broken are the sounds of sorrow. Orla! our souls shall hear the song together. One cloud shall be ours on high: the bards will mingle the names of Orla and Calmar.'

They quit the circle of the chiefs. Their steps are to the host of Lochlin. The dying blaze of oak dim-twinkles through the night. The northern star points the path to Tura. Swaran, the king, rests on his lonely hill. Here the troops are mixed: they frown in sleep, their shields beneath their heads. Their swords gleam at distance in heaps. The fires are faint; their embers fail in smoke. All is hushed; but the gale sighs on the rocks above. Lightly wheel the heroes through the slumbering band. Half the journey is past, when Mathon, resting on his shield, meets the eye of Orla. It rolls in flame, and glistens through the shade. His spear is raised on high. 'Why dost thou bend thy brow, chief of Oithona?' said fair-haired Calmar: 'we are in the midst of foes. Is this a time for delay?' 'It is a time for vengeance,' said Orla of the gloomy brow. 'Mathon of Lochlin sleeps: seest thou his spear? Its point is dim with the gore of my father. The blood of Mathon shall reek on mine; but shall I slay him sleeping, son of Mora? No! he shall feel his wound: my fame shall not soar on the blood of slumber. Rise, Mathon, rise! The son of Connal calls; thy life is his; rise to combat.' Mathon starts from sleep; but did he rise alone? No: the gathering chiefs bound on the plain. 'Fly! Calmar, fly!' said dark-haired Orla. 'Mathon is mine. I shall die in joy: but Lochlin crowds around. Fly through the shade of night.' Orla turns. The helm of Mathon is cleft; his shield falls from his arm: he shudders in his blood. He rolls by the side of the blazing oak. Strumon sees him fall: his wrath rises: his weapon glitters on the head of Orla: but a spear pierced his eye. His brain gushes through the wound, and foams on the spear of Calmar. As roll the waves of the ocean on two mighty barks of the North, so pour the men of Lochlin on the chiefs. As, breaking the surge in foam, proudly steer the barks of the North, so rise the chiefs of Morven on the scattered crests of Lochlin. The din of arms came to the ear of Fingal. He strikes his shield; his sons throng around; the people pour along the heath. Ryno bounds in joy. Ossian stalks in his arms. Oscar shakes the spear. The eagle wing of Fillan floats on the wind. Dreadful is the clang of death! many are the widows of Lochlin! Morven prevails in its strength.

Morn glimmers on the hills: no living foe is seen; but the sleepers are many; grim they lie on Erin. The breeze of ocean lifts their locks; yet they do not awake. The hawks scream above their prey.

Whose yellow locks wave o'er the breast of a chief? Bright as the gold of the stranger, they mingle with the dark hair of his friend. 'T is Calmar: he lies on the bosom of Orla. Theirs is one stream of blood. Fierce is the look of the gloomy Orla. He breathes not; but his eye is still a flame. It glares in death unclosed. His hand is grasped in Calmar's; but Calmar lives! he lives, though low. 'Rise,' said the king, 'rise, son of Mora: 't is mine to heal the wounds of heroes. Calmar may yet bound on the hills of Morven.'

'Never more shall Calmar chase the deer of Morven with Orla,' said the hero. 'What were the chase to me alone? Who would share the spoils of battle with Calmar? Orla is at rest! Rough was thy soul, Orla! yet soft to me as the dew of morn. It glared on others in lightning: to me a silver beam of night. Bear my sword to blue-eyed Mora; let it hang in my empty hall. It is not pure from blood: but it could not save Orla. Lay me with my friend. Raise the song when I am dark!'

They are laid by the stream of Lubar. Four gray stones mark the dwelling of Orla and Calmar. When Swaran was bound, our sails rose on the blue waves. The winds gave our barks to Morven: — the bards raised the song.

'What form rises on the roar of clouds? Whose dark ghost gleams on the red streams of tempests? His voice rolls on the thunder. 'T is Orla, the brown chief of Oithona. He was unmatched in war. Peace to thy soul, Orla! thy fame will not perish. Nor thine, Calmar! Lovely wast thou, son of blue-eyed Mora; but not harmless was thy sword. It hangs in thy cave. The ghosts of Lochlin shriek around its steel. Hear thy praise, Calmar! It dwells on the voice of the mighty. Thy name shakes on the echoes of Morven. Then raise thy fair locks, son of Mora. Spread them on the arch of the rainbow; and smile through the tears of the storm.'

L'AMITIÉ EST L'AMOUR SANS AILES

WHY should my anxious breast repine,
  Because my youth is fled?
Days of delight may still be mine;
  Affection is not dead.
In tracing back the years of youth,
One firm record, one lasting truth
  Celestial consolation brings;
Bear it, ye breezes, to the seat
Where first my heart responsive beat, —
  'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Through few, but deeply chequer'd years,
  What moments have been mine!
Now half obscured by clouds of tears,
  Now bright in rays divine;
Howe'er my future doom be cast,
My soul, enraptured with the past,
  To one idea fondly clings;
Friendship! that thought is all thine own,
Worth worlds of bliss, that thought alone —
  'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Where yonder yew-trees lightly wave
  Their branches on the gale,
Unheeded heaves a simple grave,
  Which tells the common tale;
Round this unconscious schoolboys stray,
Till the dull knell of childish play
  From yonder studious mansion rings;
But here whene'er my footsteps move,
My silent tears too plainly prove,
  'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Oh, Love! before thy glowing shrine
  My early vows were paid;
My hopes, my dreams, my heart was thine,
  But these are now decay'd;
For thine are pinions like the wind,
No trace of thee remains behind,
  Except, alas! thy jealous stings.

Away, away! delusive power,
Thou shalt not haunt my coming hour;
Unless, indeed, without thy wings.

Seat of my youth! thy distant spire
Recalls each scene of joy;
My bosom glows with former fire, —
In mind again a boy.
Thy grove of elms, thy verdant hill,
Thy every path delights me still,
Each flower a double fragrance flings;
Again, as once, in converse gay,
Each dear associate seems to say,
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

My Lycus! wherefore dost thou weep?
Thy falling tears restrain;
Affection for a time may sleep,
But, oh, 't will wake again.
Think, think, my friend, when next we meet,
Our long-wish'd interview, how sweet!
From this my hope of rapture springs;
While youthful hearts thus fondly swell,
Absence, my friend, can only tell,
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

In one, and one alone, deceived,
Did I my error mourn?
No — from oppressive bonds relieved,
I left the wretch to scorn.
I turn'd to those my childhood knew,
With feelings warm, with bosoms true,
Twined with my heart's according strings;
And till those vital chords shall break,
For none but these my breast shall wake
Friendship, the power deprived of wings!

Ye few! my soul, my life is yours,
My memory and my hope;
Your worth a lasting love ensures,
Unfetter'd in its scope;
From smooth deceit and terror sprung,
With aspect fair and honey'd tongue,
Let Adulation wait on kings;
With joy elate, by snares beset,
We, we, my friends, can ne'er forget,
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Fictions and dreams inspire the bard
Who rolls the epic song;
Friendship and Truth be my reward —
To me no bays belong;
If laurell'd Fame but dwells with lies,
Me the enchantress ever flies,
Whose heart and not whose fancy sings;
Simple and young, I dare not feign;
Mine be the rude yet heartfelt strain,
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

December 29, 1806.

THE PRAYER OF NATURE

Father of Light! great God of Heaven!
Hear'st thou the accents of despair?
Can guilt like man's be e'er forgiven?
Can vice atone for crimes by prayer?

Father of Light, on thee I call!
Thou seest my soul is dark within;
Thou who canst mark the sparrow's fall,
Avert from me the death of sin.

No shrine I seek, to sects unknown;
Oh, point to me the path of truth!
Thy dread omnipotence I own;
Spare, yet amend, the faults of youth.

Let bigots rear a gloomy fane,
Let superstition hail the pile,
Let priests, to spread their sable reign,
With tales of mystic rites beguile.

Shall man confine his Maker's sway
To Gothic domes of mouldering stone?
Thy temple is the face of day;
Earth, ocean, heaven, thy boundless throne.

Shall man condemn his race to hell,
Unless they bend in pompous form?
Tell us that all, for one who fell,
Must perish in the mingling storm?

Shall each pretend to reach the skies,
Yet doom his brother to expire,
Whose soul a different hope supplies,
Or doctrines less severe inspire?

Shall these, by creeds they can't expound,
Prepare a fancied bliss or woe?
Shall reptiles, grovelling on the ground,
Their great Creator's purpose know?

Shall those who live for self alone,
Whose years float on in daily crime —
Shall they by Faith for guilt atone,
And live beyond the bounds of Time?

Father! no prophet's laws I seek, —
Thy laws in Nature's works appear; —

I own myself corrupt and weak,
Yet will I pray, for thou wilt hear !

Thou who canst guide the wandering star
Through trackless realms of æther's space;
Who calm'st the elemental war,
Whose hand from pole to pole I trace: —

Thou, who in wisdom placed me here,
Who, when thou wilt, canst take me hence,
Ah ! whilst I tread this earthly sphere,
Extend to me thy wide defence.

To Thee, my God, to thee I call !
Whatever weal or woe betide,
By thy command I rise or fall,
In thy protection I confide.

If, when this dust to dust 's restored,
My soul shall float on airy wing,
How shall thy glorious name adored
Inspire her feeble voice to sing !

But, if this fleeting spirit share
With clay the grave's eternal bed,
While life yet throbs I raise my prayer,
Though doom'd no more to quit the dead.

To Thee I breathe my humble strain,
Grateful for all thy mercies past,
And hope, my God, to thee again
This erring life may fly at last.

December 29, 1806.

TO EDWARD NOEL LONG, ESQ.

Nil ego contulerim jucundo sanus amico. — HORACE.

DEAR LONG, in this sequester'd scene,
While all around in slumber lie,
The joyous days which ours have been
Come rolling fresh on Fancy's eye;
Thus if amidst the gathering storm,
While clouds the darken'd noon deform,
Yon heaven assumes a varied glow,
I hail the sky's celestial bow
Which spreads the sign of future peace
And bids the war of tempests cease.
Ah ! though the present brings but pain,
I think those days may come again;
Or if, in melancholy mood,
Some lurking envious fear intrude,
To check my bosom's fondest thought,
And interrupt the golden dream,
I crush the fiend with malice fraught,
And still indulge my wonted theme.
Although we ne'er again can trace,
In Granta's vale, the pedant's lore;
Nor through the groves of Ida chase
Our raptured visions as before;
Though Youth has flown on rosy pinion,
And Manhood claims his stern dominion —
Age will not every hope destroy,
But yield some hours of sober joy.

Yes, I will hope that Time's broad wing
Will shed around some dews of spring:
But if his scythe must sweep the flowers
Which bloom among the fairy bowers,
Where smiling Youth delights to dwell
And hearts with early rapture swell;
If frowning Age, with cold control,
Confines the current of the soul,
Congeals the tear of Pity's eye,
Or checks the sympathetic sigh,
Or hears unmoved misfortune's groan,
And bids me feel for self alone;
Oh, may my bosom never learn
To soothe its wonted heedless flow;
Still, still despise the censor stern,
But ne'er forget another's woe.
Yes, as you knew me in the days
O'er which Remembrance yet delays,
Still may I rove, untutor'd, wild,
And even in age at heart a child.

Though now on airy visions borne,
To you my soul is still the same.
Oft has it been my fate to mourn,
And all my former joys are tame.
But, hence ! ye hours of sable hue !
Your frowns are gone, my sorrows o'er:
By every bliss my childhood knew,
I 'll think upon your shade no more.
Thus, when the whirlwind's rage is past,
And caves their sullen roar enclose,
We heed no more the wintry blast,
When lull'd by zephyr to repose.

Full often has my infant Muse
Attuned to love her languid lyre;
But now without a theme to choose,
The strains in stolen sighs expire.
My youthful nymphs, alas ! are flown;
E—— is a wife, and C—— a mother,

And Carolina sighs alone,
And Mary 's given to another;
And Cora's eye which roll'd on me,
Can now no more my love recall:
In truth, dear Long, 't was time to flee;
For Cora's eye will shine on all.
And though the sun, with genial rays,
His beams alike to all displays,
And every lady's eye 's a *sun*,
These last should be confined to one.
The soul's meridian don't become her,
Whose sun displays a general *summer!*
Thus faint is every former flame,
And passion's self is now a name.
As, when the ebbing flames are low,
The aid, which once improved their light
And bade them burn with fiercer glow,
Now quenches all their sparks in night;
Thus has it been with passion's fires,
As many a boy and girl remembers,
While all the force of love expires,
Extinguish'd with the dying embers.

But now, dear Long, 't is midnight's noon,
And clouds obscure the watery moon,
Whose beauties I shall not rehearse,
Described in every stripling's verse;
For why should I the path go o'er
Which every bard has trod before?
Yet ere yon silver lamp of night
Has thrice perform'd her stated round,
Has thrice retraced her path of light,
And chased away the gloom profound,
I trust that we, my gentle friend,
Shall see her rolling orbit wend
Above the dear-loved peaceful seat
Which once contain'd our youth's retreat;
And then with those our childhood knew,
We 'll mingle in the festive crew;
While many a tale of former day
Shall wing the laughing hours away,
And all the flow of souls shall pour
The sacred intellectual shower,
Nor cease till Luna's waning horn
Scarce glimmers through the mist of morn.

TO A LADY

[Mrs. Chaworth Musters, the 'Mary' of many poems.]

Oh! had my fate been join'd with thine,
As once this pledge appear'd a token,
These follies had not then been mine,
For then my peace had not been broken.

To thee these early faults I owe,
To thee, the wise and old reproving:
They know my sins, but do not know
'T was thine to break the bonds of loving.

For once my soul, like thine, was pure,
And all its rising fires could smother;
But now thy vows no more endure,
Bestow'd by thee upon another.

Perhaps his peace I could destroy,
And spoil the blisses that await him;
Yet let my rival smile in joy,
For thy dear sake I cannot hate him.

Ah! since thy angel form is gone,
My heart no more can rest with any;
But what it sought in thee alone,
Attempts, alas! to find in many.

Then fare thee well, deceitful maid!
'T were vain and fruitless to regret thee;
Nor Hope, nor Memory yield their aid,
But Pride may teach me to forget thee.

Yet all this giddy waste of years,
This tiresome round of palling pleasures;
These varied loves, these matron's fears,
These thoughtless strains to passion's measures —

If thou wert mine, had all been hush'd: —
This cheek now pale from early riot,
With passion's hectic ne'er had flush'd,
But bloom'd in calm domestic quiet.

Yes, once the rural scene was sweet,
For Nature seem'd to smile before thee;
And once my breast abhorr'd deceit, —
For then it beat but to adore thee.

But now I seek for other joys:
To think would drive my soul to madness;
In thoughtless throngs and empty noise,
I conquer half my bosom's sadness.

Yet, even in these a thought will steal,
In spite of every vain endeavour;
And fiends might pity what I feel, —
To know that thou art lost for ever.

'I WOULD I WERE A CARELESS CHILD'

I WOULD I were a careless child,
Still dwelling in my Highland cave,
Or roaming through the dusky wild,
Or bounding o'er the dark blue wave;
The cumbrous pomp of Saxon pride
Accords not with the freeborn soul,
Which loves the mountain's craggy side,
And seeks the rocks where billows roll.

Fortune! take back these cultured lands,
Take back this name of splendid sound!
I hate the touch of servile hands,
I hate the slaves that cringe around.
Place me among the rocks I love,
Which sound to Ocean's wildest roar;
I ask but this — again to rove
Through scenes my youth hath known before.

Few are my years, and yet I feel
The world was ne'er design'd for me:
Ah! why do dark'ning shades conceal
The hour when man must cease to be?
Once I beheld a splendid dream,
A visionary scene of bliss:
Truth! — wherefore did thy hated beam
Awake me to a world like this?

I loved — but those I loved are gone;
Had friends — my early friends are fled:
How cheerless feels the heart alone
When all its former hopes are dead!
Though gay companions o'er the bowl
Dispel awhile the sense of ill;
Though pleasure stirs the maddening soul,
The heart — the heart — is lonely still.

How dull! to hear the voice of those
Whom rank or chance, whom wealth or power,
Have made, though neither friends nor foes,
Associates of the festive hour.
Give me again a faithful few,
In years and feelings still the same,
And I will fly the midnight crew,
Where boist'rous joy is but a name.

And woman, lovely woman! thou,
My hope, my comforter, my all!
How cold must be my bosom now,
When e'en thy smiles begin to pall!
Without a sigh would I resign
This busy scene of splendid woe,
To make that calm contentment mine,
Which virtue knows, or seems to know.

Fain would I fly the haunts of men —
I seek to shun, not hate mankind;
My breast requires the sullen glen,
Whose gloom may suit a darken'd mind.
Oh! that to me the wings were given
Which bear the turtle to her nest!
Then would I cleave the vault of heaven,
To flee away, and be at rest.

'WHEN I ROVED A YOUNG HIGHLANDER'

[The 'Mary' of this poem is not Mrs. Chaworth Musters, nor is it his distant cousin Mary Duff, but the daughter of James Robertson, of the farmhouse of Ballatrich on Deeside.]

WHEN I roved a young Highlander o'er the dark heath,
And climb'd thy steep summit, oh Morven of snow!
To gaze on the torrent that thunder'd beneath,
Or the mist of the tempest that gather'd below,
Untutor'd by science, a stranger to fear,
And rude as the rocks where my infancy grew,
No feeling, save one, to my bosom was dear;
Need I say, my sweet Mary, 't was centred in you?

Yet it could not be love, for I knew not the name, —
What passion can dwell in the heart of a child?
But still I perceive an emotion the same
As I felt, when a boy, on the crag-cover'd wild:
One image alone on my bosom impress'd,
I loved my bleak regions, nor panted for new;
And few were my wants, for my wishes were bless'd;
And pure were my thoughts, for my soul was with you.

I arose with the dawn; with my dog as my guide,
From mountain to mountain I bounded along;
I breasted the billows of Dee's rushing tide,
And heard at a distance the Highlander's song:
At eve, on my heath-cover'd couch of repose,
No dreams, save of Mary, were spread to my view;
And warm to the skies my devotions arose,
For the first of my prayers was a blessing on you.

I left my bleak home, and my visions are gone;
The mountains are vanish'd, my youth is no more;
As the last of my race, I must wither alone,
And delight but in days I have witness'd before:
Ah! splendour has raised, but embitter'd, my lot;
More dear were the scenes which my infancy knew:
Though my hopes may have fail'd, yet they are not forgot;
Though cold is my heart, still it lingers with you.

When I see some dark hill point its crest to the sky,
I think of the rocks that o'ershadow Colbleen;
When I see the soft blue of a love-speaking eye,
I think of those eyes that endear'd the rude scene;
When, haply, some light-waving locks I behold,
That faintly resemble my Mary's in hue,
I think on the long flowing ringlets of gold,
The locks that were sacred to beauty, and you.

Yet the day may arrive when the mountains once more
Shall rise to my sight in their mantles of snow;
But while these soar above me, unchanged as before,
Will Mary be there to receive me? — ah, no!

Adieu, then, ye hills where my childhood was bred!
Thou sweet flowing Dee, to thy waters adieu!
No home in the forest shall shelter my head, —
Ah, Mary! what home could be mine but with you?

TO GEORGE, EARL DELAWARR

Oh yes, I will own we were dear to each other;
The friendships of childhood, though fleeting, are true;
The love which you felt was the love of a brother,
Nor less the affection I cherish'd for you.

But Friendship can vary her gentle dominion,
The attachment of years in a moment expires;
Like Love, too, she moves on a swift-waving pinion,
But glows not, like Love, with unquenchable fires.

Full oft have we wander'd through Ida together,
And bless'd were the scenes of our youth, I allow:
In the spring of our life, how serene is the weather!
But winter's rude tempests are gathering now.

No more with affection shall memory blending,
The wonted delights of our childhood retrace:
When pride steels the bosom, the heart is unbending,
And what would be justice appears a disgrace.

However, dear George, for I still must esteem you —
The few whom I love I can never upbraid —
The chance which has lost may in future redeem you,
Repentance will cancel the vow you have made.

I will not complain, and though chill'd is affection,
With me no corroding resentment shall live:
My bosom is calm'd by the simple reflection,
That both may be wrong, and that both should forgive.

You knew that my soul, that my heart, my existence,
If danger demanded, were wholly your own;
You knew me unalter'd by years or by distance,
Devoted to love and to friendship alone.

You knew, — but away with the vain retrospection!
The bond of affection no longer endures;
Too late you may droop o'er the fond recollection,
And sigh for the friend who was formerly yours.

For the present, we part, — I will hope not for ever;
For time and regret will restore you at last:
To forget our dissension we both should endeavour,
I ask no atonement but days like the past.

TO THE EARL OF CLARE

Tu semper amoris
Sis memor, et cari comitis ne abscedat imago.
Val. Flac., *Argonaut*, iv. 36.

Friend of my youth! when young we roved
Like striplings, mutually beloved,
With friendship's purest glow;
The bliss which wing'd those rosy hours,
Was such as pleasure seldom showers
On mortals here below.

The recollection seems alone
Dearer than all the joys I 've known,
When distant far from you:
Though pain, 't is still a pleasing pain,
To trace those days and hours again,
And sigh again, adieu!

My pensive memory lingers o'er
Those scenes to be enjoy'd no more,
Those scenes regretted ever;
The measure of our youth is full,
Life's evening dream is dark and dull,
And we may meet — ah! never!

As when one parent spring supplies
Two streams which from one fountain rise,
Together join'd in vain;
How soon, diverging from their source,
Each, murmuring, seeks another course,
Till mingled in the main!

Our vital streams of weal or woe,
Though near, alas! distinctly flow,
Nor mingle as before:
Now swift or slow, now black or clear,
Till death's unfathom'd gulf appear,
And both shall quit the shore.

Our souls, my friend! which once supplied
One wish, nor breathed a thought beside,
Now flow in different channels:
Disdaining humbler rural sports,
'T is yours to mix in polish'd courts,
And shine in fashion's annals;

'T is mine to waste on love my time,
Or vent my reveries in rhyme,
Without the aid of reason;
For sense and reason (critics know it)
Have quitted every amorous poet,
Nor left a thought to seize on.

Poor Little! sweet, melodious bard!
Of late esteem'd it monstrous hard
That he, who sang before all, —
He who the lore of love expanded, —
By dire reviewers should be branded,
As void of wit and moral.

And yet, while Beauty's praise is thine,
Harmonious favourite of the Nine!
Repine not at thy lot.
Thy soothing lays may still be read,
When persecution's arm is dead,
And critics are forgot.

Still I must yield those worthies merit,
Who chasten, with unsparing spirit,
Bad rhymes, and those who write them;
And though myself may be the next
By critic sarcasm to be vext,
I really will not fight them.

Perhaps they would do quite as well
To break the rudely sounding shell
Of such a young beginner:

He who offends at pert nineteen,
Ere thirty may become, I ween,
A very harden'd sinner.

Now, Clare, I must return to you,
And, sure, apologies are due;
Accept then my concession.
In truth, dear Clare, in fancy's flight
I soar along from left to right;
My muse admires digression.

I think I said 't would be your fate
To add one star to royal state; —
May regal smiles attend you!
And should a noble monarch reign,
You will not seek his smiles in vain,
If worth can recommend you.

Yet since in danger courts abound,
Where specious rivals glitter round,
From snares may saints preserve you;
And grant your love or friendship ne'er
From any claim a kindred care,
But those who best deserve you!

Not for a moment may you stray
From truth's secure, unerring way!
May no delights decoy!
O'er roses may your footsteps move,
Your smiles be ever smiles of love,
Your tears be tears of joy!

Oh! if you wish that happiness
Your coming days and years may bless,
And virtues crown your brow;
Be still as you were wont to be,
Spotless as you 've been known to me, —
Be still as you are now.

And though some trifling share of praise,
To cheer my last declining days,
To me were doubly dear;
Whilst blessing your beloved name,
I 'd waive at once a *poet's* fame,
To prove a *prophet* here.
1807.

LINES WRITTEN BENEATH AN ELM IN THE CHURCHYARD OF HARROW

Spot of my youth! whose hoary branches sigh,
Swept by the breeze that fans thy cloudless sky;
Where now alone I muse, who oft have trod,
With those I loved, thy soft and verdant sod;
With those who, scatter'd far, perchance deplore,
Like me, the happy scenes they knew before:
Oh! as I trace again thy winding hill,
Mine eyes admire, my heart adores thee still,
Thou drooping Elm! beneath whose boughs I lay,
And frequent mused the twilight hours away;
Where, as they once were wont, my limbs recline,
But, ah! without the thoughts which then were mine:
How do thy branches, moaning to the blast,
Invite the bosom to recall the past,
And seem to whisper, as they gently swell,
'Take, while thou canst, a lingering, last farewell!'

When fate shall chill at length this fever'd breast,
And calm its cares and passions into rest,
Oft have I thought, 't would soothe my dying hour, —
If aught may soothe when life resigns her power, —
To know some humbler grave, some narrow cell,
Would hide my bosom where it loved to dwell.
With this fond dream, methinks, 't were sweet to die —
And here it linger'd, here my heart might lie;
Here might I sleep where all my hopes arose,
Scene of my youth and couch of my repose;
For ever stretch'd beneath this mantling shade,
Press'd by the turf where once my childhood play'd;
Wrapt by the soil that veils the spot I loved,
Mix'd with the earth o'er which my footsteps moved;
Blest by the tongues that charm'd my youthful ear,
Mourn'd by the few my soul acknowledged here;
Deplored by those in early days allied,
And unremember'd by the world beside
September 2, 1807.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

TRANSLATION FROM ANACREON

Εἰς ῥόδον. — *Ode* 5.

[First printed in Edition of 1898 from a manuscript in possession of Mr. Murray.]

MINGLE with the genial bowl
The Rose, the *flow'ret* of the Soul,
The Rose and Grape together quaff'd,
How doubly sweet will be the draught!
With Roses crown our jovial brows,
While every cheek with Laughter glows;
While Smiles and Songs, with Wine incite,
To wing our moments with Delight.
Rose by far the fairest birth,
Which Spring and Nature cull from Earth—
Rose whose sweetest perfume given,
Breathes our thoughts from Earth to Heaven —
Rose whom the Deities above,
From Jove to Hebe, dearly love,
When Cytherea's blooming Boy
Flies lightly through the dance of Joy,
With him the Graces then combine,
And rosy wreaths their locks entwine.
Then will I sing divinely crown'd,
With dusky leaves my temples bound —
Lyæus! in thy bowers of pleasure,
I'll wake a wildly thrilling measure.
There will my gentle Girl and I
Along the mazes sportive fly,
Will bend before thy potent throne —
Rose, Wine, and Beauty, all my own.

1805.

OSSIAN'S ADDRESS TO THE SUN IN 'CARTHON'

[This essay in turning 'Ossian' into verse is another instance of the influence of that rhapsodist on our poet. It was first printed in Edition of 1898 from a manuscript in possession of Mr. Murray.]

OH! thou that roll'st above thy glorious Fire,
Round as the shield which graced my godlike Sire,
Whence are the beams, O Sun! thy endless blaze,
Which far eclipse each minor Glory's rays?
Forth in thy Beauty here thou deign'st to shine!
Night quits her car, the twinkling stars decline;
Pallid and cold the Moon descends to cave
Her sinking beams beneath the Western wave;
But thou still mov'st alone, of light the Source —
Who can o'ertake thee in thy fiery course?
Oaks of the mountains fall, the rocks decay,
Weigh'd down with years the hills dissolve away.
A certain space to yonder Moon is given,
She rises, smiles, and then is lost in Heaven.
Ocean in sullen murmurs ebbs and flows,
But thy bright beam unchanged for ever glows!
When Earth is darken'd with tempestuous skies,
When Thunder shakes the sphere and Lightning flies,
Thy face, O Sun, no rolling blasts deform,
Thou look'st from clouds and laughest at the Storm.
To Ossian, Orb of Light! thou look'st in vain,
Nor canst thou glad his aged eyes again,
Whether thy locks in Orient Beauty stream,
Or glimmer through the West with fainter gleam —
But thou, perhaps, like me with age must bend;
Thy season o'er, thy days will find their end,
No more yon azure vault with rays adorn,
Lull'd in the clouds, nor hear the voice of Morn.
Exult, O Sun, in all thy youthful strength!
Age, dark unlovely Age, appears at length,
As gleams the moonbeam through the broken cloud
While mountain vapours spread their misty shroud —
The Northern tempest howls along at last,
And wayworn strangers shrink amid the blast.
Thou rolling Sun who gild'st those rising towers,
Fair didst thou shine upon my earlier hours!
I hail'd with smiles the cheering rays of Morn,
My breast by no tumultuous Passion torn —

Now hateful are thy beams which wake no more
The sense of joy which thrill'd my breast before;
Welcome thou cloudy veil of nightly skies,
To thy bright canopy the mourner flies;
Once bright, thy Silence lull'd my frame to rest,
And Sleep my soul with gentle visions blest;
Now wakeful Grief disdains her mild controul,
Dark is the night, but darker is my Soul.
Ye warring Winds of Heav'n your fury urge,
To me congenial sounds your wintry Dirge:
Swift as your wings my happier days have past,
Keen as your storms is Sorrow's chilling blast;
To Tempests thus exposed my Fate has been,
Piercing like yours, like yours, alas! unseen.

1805.

A VERSION OF OSSIAN'S ADDRESS TO THE SUN

FROM THE POEM 'CARTHON'

[These lines were published by Mr. Pierre la Rose in the *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1898. They were found by him written in Byron's hand in the poet's copy of Ossian deposited in the Harvard University Library.]

O Thou! who rollest in yon azure field,
Round as the orb of my forefathers' shield,
Whence are thy beams? From what eternal store
Dost thou, O Sun! thy vast effulgence pour?
In awful grandeur, when thou movest on high,
The stars start back and hide them in the sky;
The pale Moon sickens in thy brightening blaze,
And in the western wave avoids thy gaze.
Alone thou shinest forth — for who can rise
Companion of thy splendour in the skies!
The mountain oaks are seen to fall away —
Mountains themselves by length of years decay —
With ebbs and flows is the rough Ocean tost;
In heaven the Moon is for a season lost,
But thou, amidst the fulness of thy joy,
The same art ever, blazing in the sky!
When tempests wrap the world from pole to pole,
When vivid lightnings flash and thunders roll,
Thou far above their utmost fury borne,
Look'st forth in beauty, laughing them to scorn.
But vainly now on me thy beauties blaze —
Ossian no longer can enraptured gaze!
Whether at morn, in lucid lustre gay,
On eastern clouds thy yellow tresses play,
Or else at eve, in radiant glory drest,
Thou tremblest at the portals of the west,
I see no more! But thou mayest fail at length,
Like Ossian lose thy beauty and thy strength,
Like him — but for a season — in thy sphere
To shine with splendour, then to disappear!
Thy years shall have an end, and thou no more
Bright through the world enlivening radiance pour,
But sleep within thy clouds, and fail to rise,
Heedless when Morning calls thee to the skies!
Then now exult, O Sun! and gaily shine,
While Youth and Strength and Beauty all are thine.
For Age is dark, unlovely, as the light
Shed by the Moon when clouds deform the night,
Glimmering uncertain as they hurry past.
Loud o'er the plain is heard the northern blast,
Mists shroud the hills, and 'neath the growing gloom,
The weary traveller shrinks and sighs for home.

1806.

PIGNUS AMORIS

[First printed in Edition of 1898 from a manuscript in possession of Mr. Murray.]

As by the fix'd decrees of Heaven,
'Tis vain to hope that Joy can last;
The dearest boon that Life has given,
To me is — visions of the past.

For these this toy of blushing hue
I prize with zeal before unknown,
It tells me of a Friend I knew,
Who loved me for myself alone.

It tells me what how few can say
Though all the social tie commend;
Recorded in my heart 't will lay,
It tells me mine was once a Friend.

Through many a weary day gone by,
With time the gift is dearer grown;
And still I view in Memory's eye
That teardrop sparkle through my own.

And heartless Age perhaps will smile,
Or wonder whence those feelings sprung;
Yet let not sterner souls revile,
For Both were open, Both were young.

And Youth is sure the only time,
When Pleasure blends no base alloy;
When Life is blest without a crime,
And Innocence resides with Joy.

Let those reprove my feeble Soul,
Who laugh to scorn Affection's name;
While these impose a harsh controul,
All will forgive who feel the same

Then still I wear my simple toy,
With pious care from wreck I 'll save it;
And this will form a dear employ
For dear I was to him who gave it.

? 1806.

TO A KNOT OF UNGENEROUS CRITICS

[First printed in Edition of 1898 from a manuscript in possession of Mr. Murray.]

Rail on, Rail on, ye heartless Crew!
My strains were never meant for you;
Remorseless Rancour still reveal,
And damn the verse you cannot feel.
Invoke those kindred passions' aid,
Whose baleful stings your breasts pervade;
Crush, if you can, the hopes of youth,
Trampling regardless on the Truth.
Truth's Records you consult in vain,
She will not blast her native strain;
She will assist her votary's cause,
His will at least be her applause,
Your prayer the gentle Power will spurn.
To Fiction's motley altar turn.
Who joyful in the fond address
Her favour'd worshippers will bless:
And lo! she holds a magic glass,
Where Images reflected pass,
Bent on your knees the Boon receive —
This will assist you to deceive —
The glittering gift was made for you,
Now hold it up to public view;
Lest evil unforeseen betide,
A Mask each canker'd brow shall hide
(Whilst Truth my sole desire is nigh,
Prepared the danger to defy),
'There is the Maid's perverted name,
And there the Poet's guilty Flame,
Gloaming a deep phosphoric fire,
Threatening — but ere it spreads, retire.'
Says Truth 'Up Virgins, do not fear!
The Comet rolls its Influence here;
'T is Scandal's Mirror you perceive,
These dazzling Meteors but deceive —
Approach and touch — Nay do not turn,
It blazes there but will not burn.' —
At once the shivering Mirror flies,
Teeming no more with varnish'd Lies;
The baffled friends of Fiction start,
Too late desiring to depart —
Truth poising high Ithuriel's spear
Bids every Fiend unmask'd appear,
The vizard tears from every face,
And dooms them to a dire disgrace.
For ere they compass their escape,
Each takes perforce a native shape —
The Leader of the wrathful Band,
Behold a portly Female stand!
She raves, impell'd by private pique,
This mean unjust revenge to seek;
From vice to save this virtuous Age,
Thus does she vent indecent rage!
What child has she of promise fair,
Who claims a fostering Mother's care?
Whose Innocence requires defence,
Or forms at least a smooth pretence,
Thus to disturb a harmless Boy,
His humble hope, and peace annoy?
She need not fear the amorous rhyme,
Love will not tempt her future time,
For her his wings have ceased to spread,
No more he flutters round her head;
Her day's Meridian now is past,
The clouds of Age her Sun o'ercast;
To her the strain was never sent,
For feeling Souls alone 't was meant —
The verse she seized, unask'd, unbade,
And damn'd, ere yet the whole was read!

Yes! for one single erring verse,
Pronounced an unrelenting Curse;
Yes! at a first and transient view,
Condemn'd a heart she never knew.
Can such a verdict then decide,
Which springs from disappointed pride?
Without a wondrous share of Wit,
To judge is such a Matron fit?
The rest of the censorious throng
Who to this zealous Band belong,
To her a general homage pay,
And right or wrong her wish obey:
Why should I point my pen of steel
To break 'such flies upon the wheel'?
With minds to Truth and Sense unknown,
Who dare not call their words their own.
Rail on, Rail on, ye heartless Crew!
Your Leader's grand design pursue:
Secure behind her ample shield,
Yours is the harvest of the field.
My path with thorns you cannot strew,
Nay more, my warmest thanks are due;
When such as you revile my Name,
Bright beams the rising Sun of Fame,
Chasing the shades of envious night,
Outshining every critic Light.
Such, such as you will serve to show
Each radiant tint with higher glow.
Vain is the feeble cheerless toil,
Your efforts on yourselves recoil;
Then Glory still for me you raise,
Yours is the Censure, mine the Praise.

December 1, 1806.

SOLILOQUY OF A BARD IN THE COUNTRY

[First printed in Edition of 1898 from a manuscript in possession of Mr. Murray.]

'T WAS now the noon of night, and all was still,
Except a hapless Rhymer and his quill.
In vain he calls each Muse in order down,
Like other females, these will sometimes frown;
He frets, he fumes, and ceasing to invoke
The Nine, in anguish'd accents thus he spoke:
Ah what avails it thus to waste my time,
To roll in Epic, or to rave in Rhyme?
What worth is some few partial readers' praise,
If ancient Virgins croaking *censures* raise?
Where few attend, 't is useless to indite;
Where few can read, 't is folly sure to write;
Where none but girls and striplings dare admire,
And Critics rise in every country Squire —
But yet this last my candid Muse admits,
When Peers are Poets, Squires may well be Wits;
When schoolboys vent their amorous flames in verse,
Matrons may sure their characters asperse;
And if a little parson joins the train,
And echoes back his Patron's voice again —
Though not delighted, yet I must forgive,
Parsons as well as other folks must live: —
From rage he rails not, rather say from dread,
He does not speak for Virtue, but for bread;
And this we know is in his Patron's giving,
For Parsons cannot eat without a *Living*.
The Matron knows I love the Sex too well,
Even unprovok'd aggression to repel.
What though from private pique her anger grew,
And bade her blast a heart she never knew?
What though, she said, for one light heedless line,
That Wilmot's verse was far more pure than mine!
In wars like these I neither fight nor fly,
When *dames* accuse 't is bootless to deny;
Hers be the harvest of the martial field,
I can't attack, when Beauty forms the shield.
But when a pert Physician loudly cries,
Who hunts for scandal and who lives by lies,
A walking register of daily news,
Train'd to invent and skilful to abuse —
For arts like these at bounteous tables fed,
When S—— condemns a book he never read;
Declaring with a coxcomb's native air,
The *moral's* shocking, though the *rhymes* are fair; —
Ah! must he rise unpunish'd from the feast,
Nor lash'd by vengeance into truth at least?
Such lenity were more than Man's indeed!
Those who condemn, should surely deign to read.
Yet must I spare — nor thus my pen degrade,
I quite forgot that scandal was his trade.
For food and raiment thus the coxcomb rails,

For those who fear his physic, like his *tales*.
Why should his harmless censure seem offence?
Still let him eat, although at my expense,
And join the herd to Sense and Truth unknown,
Who dare not call their very thoughts their own,
And share with these applause, a godlike bribe,
In short, do anything, except *prescribe;*—
For though in garb of Galen he appears,
His practice is not equal to his years—
Without improvement since he first began,
A young Physician, though an ancient Man.
Now let me cease—Physician, Parson, Dame,
Still urge your task, and if you can, defame;
The humble offerings of my Muse destroy,
And crush, oh! noble conquest! crush a Boy.
What though some silly girls have loved the strain,
And kindly bade me tune my Lyre again;
What though some feeling, or some partial few,
Nay, Men of Taste and Reputation too,
Have deign'd to praise the firstlings of my Muse—
If *you* your sanction to the theme refuse,
If *you* your great protection still withdraw,
Whose Praise is Glory, and whose Voice is law,
Soon must I fall an unresisting foe,
A hapless victim yielding to the blow.
Thus Pope by Curl and Dennis was destroy'd,
Thus Gray and Mason yield to furious Loyd;
From Dryden, Milbourne tears the palm away,
And thus I fall, though meaner far than they.
As in the field of combat, side by side,
A Fabius and some noble Roman died.

December, 1806.

TO —

[First printed in Edition of 1898 from a manuscript in possession of Mr. Murray.]

Oh! well I know your subtle Sex,
  Frail daughters of the wanton Eve,—
While jealous pangs our Souls perplex,
  No passion prompts you to relieve.

From Love, or Pity, ne'er you fall,
  By *you*, no mutual Flame is felt,
'T is Vanity, which rules you all,
  Desire alone which makes you melt.

I will not say no *souls* are yours,
  Aye, ye have Souls, and dark ones too,
Souls to contrive those smiling lures,
  To snare our simple hearts for you.

Yet shall you never bind me fast,
  Long to adore such brittle toys,
I'll rove along, from first to last,
  And change whene'er my fancy cloys.

Oh! I should be a *baby* fool,
  To sigh the dupe of female art—
Woman! perhaps thou hast a *Soul*,
  But where have *Demons hid* thy *Heart*?

January, 1807.

ON THE EYES OF MISS A—— H——

[First printed in Edition of 1898 from a manuscript in possession of Mr. Murray.]

Anne's Eye is liken'd to the *Sun*,
  From it such Beams of Beauty fall;
And *this* can be denied by none,
  For like the *Sun*, it shines on *All*.

Then do not admiration smother,
  Or say these glances don't become her;
To *you*, or *I*, or *any other*
  Her *Sun* displays perpetual Summer.

January 14, 1807.

STANZAS TO JESSY

[These stanzas, which appeared originally in *Monthly Literary Recollections* of July, 1807, have always been attributed to Byron but were never acknowledged by him later in life. They were signed in the magazine 'George Gordon, Lord Byron.']

There is a mystic thread of life
  So dearly wreathed with mine alone,
That Destiny's relentless knife
  At once must sever both, or none.

There is a Form on which these eyes
Have fondly gazed with such delight —
By day, that Form their joy supplies,
And Dreams restore it, through the night.

There is a Voice whose tones inspire
Such soften'd feelings in my breast,
I would not hear a Seraph Choir,
Unless that voice could join the rest.

There is a Face whose Blushes tell
Affection's tale upon the cheek,
But pallid at our fond farewell,
Proclaims more love than words can speak.

There is a Lip, which mine has prest,
But none had ever prest before;
It vow'd to make me sweetly blest,
That mine alone should press it more.

There is a Bosom all my own,
Has pillow'd oft this aching head,
A Mouth which smiles on me alone,
An Eye, whose tears with mine are shed.

There are two Hearts whose movements thrill,
In unison so closely sweet,
That Pulse to Pulse responsive still
They Both must heave, or cease to beat.

There are two Souls, whose equal flow
In gentle stream so calmly run,
That when they part — they part? — ah no!
They cannot part — those Souls are One.

EGOTISM. A LETTER TO J. T. BECHER

Ἑαυτον βύρων ἀείδει.

[First printed in Edition of 1898 from a manuscript at Newstead.]

If fate should seal my Death to-morrow
(Though much *I* hope she will *postpone* it),
I've held a share of *Joy* and *Sorrow*,
Enough for *Ten*; and *here* I *own* it.

I've lived, as many other men live,
And yet, I think, with more enjoyment:
For could I through my days again live,
I'd pass them in the *same* employment.

That *is* to say, with *some exception*,
For though I will not make confession,
I've seen too much of man's deception
Ever again to trust profession.

Some sage *Mammas* with gesture haughty,
Pronounce me quite a youthful Sinner —
But *Daughters* say, 'although he's naughty,
You must not check a *Young Beginner!*'

I've loved, and many damsels know it —
But whom I don't intend to mention,
As *certain stanzas* also show it,
Some say *deserving Reprehension*.

Some ancient Dames, of virtue fiery
(Unless Report does much belie them),
Have lately made a sharp Enquiry,
And much it *grieves* me to *deny* them.

Two whom I loved had *eyes* of *Blue*,
To which I hope you've no objection;
The *Rest* had eyes of *darker Hue* —
Each Nymph, of course, was *all perfection*.

But here I'll close my *chaste* Description,
Nor say the deeds of animosity;
For *silence* is the best prescription,
To *physic* idle curiosity.

Of *Friends* I've known a *goodly Hundred* —
For finding *one* in each acquaintance,
By *some deceived*, by others plunder'd,
Friendship, to me, was not *Repentance*.

At *School* I thought like other *Children*;
Instead of *Brains*, a fine Ingredient,
Romance, my *youthful Head bewildering*,
To *Sense* had made me disobedient.

A victim, *nearly* from affection,
To certain *very precious scheming*,
The still remaining recollection
Has *cured* my *boyish soul* of *Dreaming*.

By Heaven! I rather would forswear
The Earth, and all the joys reserved me,
Than dare again the *specious Snare*,
From which *my Fate* and *Heaven preserved* me.

Still I possess some Friends who love me —
In each a much esteem'd and true one;
The Wealth of Worlds shall never move me
To quit their Friendship, for a new one.

But Becher! you're a *reverend pastor*,
Now take it in consideration,
Whether for penance I should fast, or
Pray for my *sins* in expiation.

I own myself the child of *Folly*,
But not so wicked as they make me —
I soon must die of melancholy,
If *Female* smiles should e'er forsake me.

Philosophers have *never doubted*,
That *Ladies' Lips* were made for *kisses!*
For *Love!* I could not live without it,
For such a *cursed* place as *This is*.

Say, Becher, I shall be forgiven!
If *you* don't warrant my salvation,
I must resign all *Hopes* of *Heaven!*
For, *Faith*, I can't withstand Temptation.

P. S. — These were written between one and two, after *midnight*. I have not *corrected*, or *revised*. Yours,
BYRON.

QUERIES TO CASUISTS

[First printed in Edition of 1898 from a manuscript at Newstead.]

THE Moralists tell us that Loving is Sinning,
And always are prating about and about it,
But as Love of Existence itself's the beginning,
Say, what would Existence itself be without it?

They argue the point with much furious Invective,
Though perhaps 't were no difficult task to confute it;
But if Venus and Hymen should once prove defective,
Pray who would there be to defend or dispute it?

THE ADIEU

WRITTEN UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THE AUTHOR WOULD SOON DIE

ADIEU, thou Hill! where early joy
Spread roses o'er my brow;
Where Science seeks each loitering boy
With knowledge to endow.
Adieu, my youthful friends or foes,
Partners of former bliss or woes;
No more through Ida's paths we stray;
Soon must I share the gloomy cell,
Whose ever-slumbering inmates dwell
Unconscious of the day.

Adieu, ye hoary Regal Fanes,
Ye spires of Granta's vale,
Where Learning robed in sable reigns,
And Melancholy pale.
Ye comrades of the jovial hour,
Ye tenants of the classic bower,
On Cama's verdant margin placed,
Adieu! while memory still is mine,
For, offerings on Oblivion's shrine,
These scenes must be effaced.

Adieu, ye mountains of the clime
Where grew my youthful years;
Where Loch na Garr in snows sublime
His giant summit rears.
Why did my childhood wander forth
From you, ye regions of the North,
With sons of pride to roam?
Why did I quit my Highland cave,
Marr's dusky heath, and Dee's clear wave,
To seek a Sotheron home?

Hall of my Sires! a long farewell —
Yet why to thee adieu?
Thy vaults will echo back my knell,
Thy towers my tomb will view:
The faltering tongue which sung thy fall
And former glories of thy Hall,
Forgets its wonted simple note —
But yet the Lyre retains the strings,
And sometimes, on Æolian wings,
In dying strains may float.

Fields, which surround yon rustic cot,
While yet I linger here,
Adieu! you are not now forgot,
To retrospection dear.

Streamlet! along whose rippling surge,
My youthful limbs were wont to urge
 At noontide heat their pliant course;
Plunging with ardour from the shore,
Thy springs will lave these limbs no more,
 Deprived of active force.

And shall I here forget the scene,
 Still nearest to my breast?
Rocks rise, and rivers roll between
 The spot which passion blest;
Yet, Mary, all thy beauties seem
Fresh as in Love's bewitching dream,
 To me in smiles display'd:
Till slow disease resigns his prey
To Death, the parent of decay,
 Thine image cannot fade.

And thou, my Friend! whose gentle love
 Yet thrills my bosom's chords,
How much thy friendship was above
 Description's power of words!
Still near my breast thy gift I wear,
Which sparkled once with Feeling's tear,
 Of Love the pure, the sacred gem;
Our souls were equal, and our lot
In that dear moment quite forgot;
 Let Pride alone condemn!

All, all is dark and cheerless now!
 No smile of Love's deceit
Can warm my veins with wonted glow,
 Can bid Life's pulses beat:
Not e'en the hope of future fame
Can wake my faint, exhausted frame,
 Or crown with fancied wreaths my head.
Mine is a short inglorious race—
To humble in the dust my face,
 And mingle with the dead.

Oh Fame! thou goddess of my heart;
 On him who gains thy praise,
Pointless must fall the Spectre's dart,
 Consumed in Glory's blaze;
But me she beckons from the earth,
My name obscure, unmark'd my birth,
 My life a short and vulgar dream:
Lost in the dull, ignoble crowd,
My hopes recline within a shroud,
 My fate is Lethe's stream.

When I repose beneath the sod,
 Unheeded in the clay,
Where once my playful footsteps trod,
 Where now my head must lay;
The meed of Pity will be shed
In dew-drops o'er my narrow bed,
 By nightly skies and storms alone;
No mortal eye will deign to steep
With tears the dark sepulchral deep
 Which hides a name unknown.

Forget this world, my restless sprite,
 Turn, turn thy thoughts to Heaven:
There must thou soon direct thy flight,
 If errors are forgiven.
To bigots and to sects unknown,
Bow down beneath the Almighty's Throne;
 To Him address thy trembling prayer:
He who is merciful and just,
Will not reject a child of dust,
 Although his meanest care.

Father of Light! to Thee I call,
 My soul is dark within:
Thou, who canst mark the sparrow's fall,
 Avert the death of sin.
Thou, who canst guide the wandering star,
Who calm'st the elemental war,
 Whose mantle is yon boundless sky,
My thoughts, my words, my crimes forgive;
And, since I soon must cease to live,
 Instruct me how to die.

1807. [First published, 1832.]

TO A VAIN LADY

[Miss Anne Houson.]

Ah, heedless girl! why thus disclose
 What ne'er was meant for other ears?
Why thus destroy thine own repose
 And dig the source of future tears?

Oh, thou wilt weep, imprudent maid,
 While lurking envious foes will smile,
For all the follies thou hast said
 Of those who spoke but to beguile.

Vain girl! thy ling'ring woes are nigh,
 If thou believ'st what striplings say:
Oh, from the deep temptation fly,
 Nor fall the specious spoiler's prey.

Dost thou repeat, in childish boast,
 The words man utters to deceive?
Thy peace, thy hope, thy all is lost,
 If thou canst venture to believe.

While now amongst thy female peers
Thou tell'st again the soothing tale,
Canst thou not mark the rising sneers
Duplicity in vain would veil?

These tales in secret silence hush,
Nor make thyself the public gaze:
What modest maid without a blush
Recounts a flattering coxcomb's praise?

Will not the laughing boy despise
Her who relates each fond conceit —
Who, thinking Heaven is in her eyes,
Yet cannot see the slight deceit?

For she who takes a soft delight
These amorous nothings in revealing,
Must credit all we say or write,
While vanity prevents concealing.

Cease, if you prize your beauty's reign!
No jealousy bids me reprove:
One, who is thus from nature vain,
I pity, but I cannot love.

January 15, 1807. [First published, 1832.]

TO ANNE

[Miss Anne Houson.]

Oh, Anne! your offences to me have been grievous;
I thought from my wrath no atonement could save you;
But woman is made to command and deceive us —
I look'd in your face, and I almost forgave you.

I vow'd I could ne'er for a moment respect you,
Yet thought that a day's separation was long:
When we met, I determined again to suspect you —
Your smile soon convinced me suspicion was wrong.

I swore, in a transport of young indignation,
With fervent contempt evermore to disdain you:
I saw you — my anger became admiration;
And now, all my wish, all my hope 's to regain you.

With beauty like yours, oh, how vain the contention,
Thus lowly I sue for forgiveness before you; —
At once to conclude such a fruitless dissension,
Be false, my sweet Anne, when I cease to adore you!

January 16, 1807. [First published, 1832.]

TO THE SAME

Oh say not, sweet Anne, that the Fates have decreed
The heart which adores you should wish to dissever;
Such Fates were to me most unkind ones indeed, —
To bear me from love and from beauty for ever.

Your frowns, lovely girl, are the Fates which alone
Could bid me from fond admiration refrain;
By these, every hope, every wish were o'erthrown,
Till smiles should restore me to rapture again.

As the ivy and oak, in the forest entwined,
The rage of the tempest united must weather,
My love and my life were by nature design'd
To flourish alike, or to perish together

Then say not, sweet Anne, that the Fates have decreed
Your lover should bid you a lasting adieu;
Till Fate can ordain that his bosom shall bleed,
His soul, his existence, are centred in you

1807. [First published, 1832.]

TO THE AUTHOR OF A SONNET BEGINNING, '"SAD IS MY VERSE," YOU SAY, "AND YET NO TEAR"'

Thy verse is 'sad' enough, no doubt:
A devilish deal more sad than witty!
Why we should weep I can't find out,
Unless for *thee* we weep in pity.

Yet there is one I pity more;
And much, alas! I think he needs it:
For he, I 'm sure, will suffer sore,
Who, to his own misfortune, reads it.

Thy rhymes, without the aid of magic,
May *once* be read — but never after:
Yet their effect 's by no means tragic,
Although by far too dull for laughter.

But would you make our bosoms bleed,
And of no common pang complain —
If you would make us weep indeed,
Tell us you 'll read them o'er again.

March 8, 1807. [First published, 1832.]

ON FINDING A FAN

[Belonging to the same Anne Houson.]

In one who felt as once he felt,
This might, perhaps, have fann'd the flame;
But now his heart no more will melt,
Because that heart is not the same.

As when the ebbing flames are low,
The aid which once improved their light
And bade them burn with fiercer glow,
Now quenches all their blaze in night,

Thus has it been with passion's fires —
As many a boy and girl remembers —
While every hope of love expires,
Extinguish'd with the dying embers.

The *first*, though not a spark survive,
Some careful hand may teach to burn;
The *last*, alas! can ne'er survive,
No touch can bid its warmth return.

Or, if it chance to wake again,
Not always doom'd its heat to smother,
It sheds (so wayward fates ordain)
Its former warmth around another.

1807. [First published, 1832.]

FAREWELL TO THE MUSE

Thou Power! who hast ruled me through infancy's days,
Young offspring of Fancy, 't is time we should part;
Then rise on the gale this the last of my lays,
The coldest effusion which springs from my heart.

This bosom, responsive to rapture no more,
Shall hush thy wild notes, nor implore thee to sing;
The feelings of childhood, which taught thee to soar,
Are wafted far distant on Apathy's wing.

Though simple the themes of my rude flowing Lyre,
Yet even these themes are departed for ever;
No more beam the eyes which my dream could inspire,
My visions are flown, to return, — alas, never!

When drain'd is the nectar which gladdens the bowl,
How vain is the effort delight to prolong!
When cold is the beauty which dwelt in my soul,
What magic of Fancy can lengthen my song?

Can the lips sing of Love in the desert alone,
Of kisses and smiles which they now must resign?
Or dwell with delight on the hours that are flown?
Ah, no! for those hours can no longer be mine.

Can they speak of the friends that I lived but to love?
Ah, surely affection ennobles the strain!
But how can my numbers in sympathy move,
When I scarcely can hope to behold them again?

Can I sing of the deeds which my Fathers have done,
And raise my loud harp to the fame of my Sires?
For glories like theirs, oh, how faint is my tone!
For Heroes' exploits how unequal my fires!

Untouch'd, then, my Lyre shall reply to the blast —
'T is hush'd, and my feeble endeavours are o'er;

And those who have heard it will pardon the past,
When they know that its murmurs shall vibrate no more.

And soon shall its wild erring notes be forgot,
Since early affection and love are o'ercast:
Oh! blest had my fate been, and happy my lot,
Had the first strain of love been the dearest, the last.

Farewell, my young Muse! since we now can ne'er meet;
If our songs have been languid, they surely are few:
Let us hope that the present at least will be sweet —
The present — which seals our eternal Adieu. 40

1807. [First published, 1832.]

TO AN OAK AT NEWSTEAD

Young Oak! when I planted thee deep in the ground,
I hoped that thy days would be longer than mine;
That thy dark-waving branches would flourish around,
And ivy thy trunk with its mantle entwine.

Such, such was my hope, when, in infancy's years,
On the land of my fathers I rear'd thee with pride:
They are past, and I water thy stem with my tears, —
Thy decay not the weeds that surround thee can hide.

I left thee, my Oak, and, since that fatal hour,
A stranger has dwelt in the hall of my sire;
Till manhood shall crown me, not mine is the power, 11
But his, whose neglect may have bade thee expire.

Oh! hardy thou wert — even now little care
Might revive thy young head, and thy wounds gently heal:
But thou wert not fated affection to share —
For who could suppose that a Stranger would feel?

Ah, droop not, my Oak! lift thy head for a while;
Ere twice round yon Glory this planet shall run,
The hand of thy Master will teach thee to smile,
When Infancy's years of probation are done. 20

Oh, live then, my Oak! tow'r aloft from the weeds,
That clog thy young growth and assist thy decay,
For still in thy bosom are life's early seeds,
And still may thy branches their beauty display.

Oh! yet, if maturity's years may be thine,
Though *I* shall lie low in the cavern of death,
On thy leaves yet the day-beam of ages may shine,
Uninjured by time or the rude winter's breath.

For centuries still may thy boughs lightly wave
O'er the corse of thy lord in thy canopy laid; 30
While the branches thus gratefully shelter his grave,
The chief who survives may recline in thy shade.

And as he, with his boys, shall revisit this spot,
He will tell them in whispers more softly to tread.
Oh! surely, by these I shall ne'er be forgot:
Remembrance still hallows the dust of the dead.

And here, will they say, when in life's glowing prime,
Perhaps he has pour'd forth his young simple lay,

And here must he sleep, till the moments of time
Are lost in the hours of Eternity's day.

1807. [First published, 1832.]

ON REVISITING HARROW

Here once engaged the stranger's view
Young Friendship's record simply traced;
Few were her words, — but yet, though few,
Resentment's hand the line defaced.

Deeply she cut — but not erased,
The characters were still so plain,
That Friendship once return'd and gazed, —
Till Memory hail'd the words again.

Repentance placed them as before,
Forgiveness join'd her gentle name;
So fair the inscription seem'd once more,
That Friendship thought it still the same.

Thus might the Record now have been;
But, ah, in spite of Hope's endeavour
Or Friendship's tears, Pride rush'd between,
And blotted out the line for ever.

September, 1807. [First published, 1830.]

TO MY SON

[The poet once told Lady Byron that he had two natural children, and one of these may possibly have been the subject of this poem; but in all likelihood it is purely fictitious.]

Those flaxen locks, those eyes of blue,
Bright as thy mother's in their hue;
Those rosy lips, whose dimples play
And smile to steal the heart away,
Recall a scene of former joy,
And touch thy father's heart, my Boy!

And thou canst lisp a father's name —
Ah, William, were thine own the same, —
No self-reproach — but, let me cease —
My care for thee shall purchase peace;
Thy mother's shade shall smile in joy,
And pardon all the past, my Boy!

Her lowly grave the turf has prest,
And thou hast known a stranger's breast;
Derision sneers upon thy birth,
And yields thee scarce a name on earth;
Yet shall not these one hope destroy, —
A Father's heart is thine, my Boy!

Why, let the world unfeeling frown,
Must I fond Nature's claim disown?
Ah, no — though moralists reprove,
I hail thee, dearest child of love,
Fair cherub, pledge of youth and joy —
A Father guards thy birth, my Boy!

Oh, 't will be sweet in thee to trace,
Ere age has wrinkled o'er my face,
Ere half my glass of life is run,
At once a brother and a son;
And all my wane of years employ
In justice done to thee, my Boy!

Although so young thy heedless sire,
Youth will not damp parental fire;
And, wert thou still less dear to me,
While Helen's form revives in thee,
The breast, which beat to former joy,
Will ne'er desert its pledge, my Boy!

1807. [First published, 1830.]

SONG

[First published in the Edition of 1898 from a manuscript in the possession of the Earl of Lovelace.]

Breeze of the night in gentler sighs
More softly murmur o'er the pillow;
For Slumber seals my Fanny's eyes,
And Peace must never shun her pillow.

Or breathe those sweet Æolian strains
Stolen from celestial spheres above,
To charm her ear while some remains,
And soothe her soul to dreams of love.

But Breeze of night again forbear,
In softest murmurs only sigh;
Let not a Zephyr's pinion dare
To lift those auburn locks on high.

Chill is thy Breath thou breeze of night!
Oh! ruffle not those lids of Snow;
For only Morning's cheering light
May wake the beam that lurks below.

Blest be that lip and azure eye!
Sweet Fanny, hallow'd be thy Sleep!
Those lips shall never vent a sigh,
Those eyes may never wake to weep.

February 23, 1808.

TO HARRIET

[First published in Edition of 1898 from a manuscript in possession of Mr. Murray.]

Harriet! To see such Circumspection
In Ladies I have no objection
Concerning what they read;
An ancient Maid 's a sage adviser,
Like *her*, you will be much the wiser,
In word, as well as Deed.

But Harriet, I don't wish to flatter,
And really think 't would make the matter
More perfect if not quite,
If other Ladies when they preach,
Would certain Damsels also teach
More cautiously to write.

'FAREWELL! IF EVER FONDEST PRAYER'

Farewell! if ever fondest prayer
For other's weal avail'd on high,
Mine will not all be lost in air,
But waft thy name beyond the sky.
'T were vain to speak, to weep, to sigh:
Oh! more than tears of blood can tell,
When wrung from guilt's expiring eye,
Are in that word — Farewell! — Farewell!

These lips are mute, these eyes are dry;
But in my breast and in my brain,
Awake the pangs that pass not by,
The thought that ne'er shall sleep again.
My soul nor deigns nor dares complain,
Though grief and passion there rebel:
I only know we loved in vain —
I only feel — Farewell! — Farewell!

1808. [First published, 1814.]

'BRIGHT BE THE PLACE OF THY SOUL'

Bright be the place of thy soul!
No lovelier spirit than thine
E'er burst from its mortal control,
In the orbs of the blessed to shine.

On earth thou wert all but divine,
As thy soul shall immortally be;
And our sorrow may cease to repine,
When we know that thy God is with thee.

Light be the turf of thy tomb!
May its verdure like emeralds be:
There should not be the shadow of gloom
In aught that reminds us of thee.

Young flowers and an evergreen tree
May spring from the spot of thy rest:
But nor cypress nor yew let us see;
For why should we mourn for the blest?

1808. [First published, 1815.]

'WHEN WE TWO PARTED'

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow —
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame;
I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me —
Why wert thou so dear?
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well: —
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met —
In silence I grieve
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee? —
With silence and tears.

1808. [First published, 1816.]

'THERE WAS A TIME, I NEED NOT NAME'

There was a time, I need not name,
Since it will ne'er forgotten be,
When all our feelings were the same
As still my soul hath been to thee.

And from that hour when first thy tongue
Confess'd a love which equall'd mine,
Though many a grief my heart hath wrung,
Unknown and thus unfelt by thine,

None, none hath sunk so deep as this —
To think how all that love hath flown;
Transient as every faithless kiss,
But transient in thy breast alone.

And yet my heart some solace knew,
When late I heard thy lips declare,
In accents once imagined true,
Remembrance of the days that were.

Yes; my adored, yet most unkind!
Though thou wilt never love again,
To me 't is doubly sweet to find
Remembrance of that love remain.

Yes! 't is a glorious thought to me,
Nor longer shall my soul repine,
Whate'er thou art or e'er shalt be,
Thou hast been dearly, solely mine.

June 10, 1808. [First published, 1809.]

'AND WILT THOU WEEP WHEN I AM LOW?'

And wilt thou weep when I am low?
Sweet lady! speak those words again:
Yet if they grieve thee, say not so —
I would not give that bosom pain.

My heart is sad, my hopes are gone,
My blood runs coldly through my breast;
And when I perish, thou alone
Wilt sigh above my place of rest.

And yet, methinks, a gleam of peace
Doth through my cloud of anguish shine;
And for awhile my sorrows cease,
To know thy heart hath felt for mine.

Oh lady! blessed be that tear —
It falls for one who cannot weep;
Such precious drops are doubly dear
To those whose eyes no tear may steep.

Sweet lady! once my heart was warm
With every feeling soft as thine;
But beauty's self hath ceased to charm
A wretch created to repine.

Yet wilt thou weep when I am low?
Sweet lady! speak those words again;
Yet if they grieve thee, say not so —
I would not give that bosom pain.

August 12, 1808 [First published, 1809.]

'REMIND ME NOT, REMIND ME NOT'

Remind me not, remind me not,
Of those beloved, those vanish'd hours,
When all my soul was given to thee;
Hours that may never be forgot,
Till time unnerves our vital powers,
And thou and I shall cease to be.

Can I forget — canst thou forget,
When playing with thy golden hair,
How quick thy fluttering heart did move?
Oh! by my soul, I see thee yet,
With eyes so languid, breast so fair,
And lips, though silent, breathing love.

When thus reclining on my breast,
Those eyes threw back a glance so sweet,
As half reproach'd yet raised desire,
And still we near and nearer prest,
And still our glowing lips would meet,
As if in kisses to expire.

And then those pensive eyes would close,
And bid their lids each other seek,
Veiling the azure orbs below;
While their long lashes' darken'd gloss
Seem'd stealing o'er thy brilliant cheek,
Like raven's plumage smooth'd on snow

I dreamt last night our love return'd,
And, sooth to say, that very dream
Was sweeter in its phantasy,
Than if for other hearts I burn'd,
For eyes that ne'er like thine could beam
In rapture's wild reality.

Then tell me not, remind me not,
Of hours which, though for ever gone,
Can still a pleasing dream restore,

Till thou and I shall be forgot,
And senseless as the mouldering stone
Which tells that we shall be no more.

August 13, 1808. [First published, 1809.]

TO A YOUTHFUL FRIEND

FEW years have pass'd since thou and I
Were firmest friends, at least in name,
And childhood's gay sincerity
Preserved our feelings long the same.

But now, like me, too well thou know'st
What trifles oft the heart recall;
And those who once have loved the most
Too soon forget they loved at all.

And such the change the heart displays,
So frail is early friendship's reign,
A month's brief lapse, perhaps a day's,
Will view thy mind estranged again.

If so, it never shall be mine
To mourn the loss of such a heart;
The fault was Nature's fault, not thine,
Which made thee fickle as thou art.

As rolls the ocean's changing tide,
So human feelings ebb and flow;
And who would in a breast confide,
Where stormy passions ever glow?

It boots not that, together bred,
Our childish days were days of joy:
My spring of life has quickly fled;
Thou, too, hast ceased to be a boy.

And when we bid adieu to youth,
Slaves to the specious world's control,
We sigh a long farewell to truth;
That world corrupts the noblest soul.

Ah, joyous season! when the mind
Dares all things boldly but to lie;
When thought ere spoke is unconfined,
And sparkles in the placid eye.

Not so in Man's maturer years,
When Man himself is but a tool;
When interest sways our hopes and fears,
And all must love and hate by rule.

With fools in kindred vice the same,
We learn at length our faults to blend;
And those, and those alone, may claim
The prostituted name of friend.

Such is the common lot of man:
Can we then 'scape from folly free?
Can we reverse the general plan,
Nor be what all in turn must be?

No; for myself, so dark my fate
Through every turn of life hath been,
Man and the world so much I hate,
I care not when I quit the scene.

But thou, with spirit frail and light,
Wilt shine awhile, and pass away;
As glow-worms sparkle through the night,
But dare not stand the test of day.

Alas! whenever folly calls
Where parasites and princes meet
(For cherish'd first in royal halls,
The welcome vices kindly greet),

Ev'n now thou 'rt nightly seen to add
One insect to the fluttering crowd;
And still thy trifling heart is glad
To join the vain, and court the proud.

There dost thou glide from fair to fair,
Still simpering on with eager haste,
As flies along the gay parterre,
That taint the flowers they scarcely taste.

But say, what nymph will prize the flame
Which seems, as marshy vapours move,
To flit along from dame to dame,
An ignis-fatuus gleam of love?

What friend for thee, howe'er inclined,
Will deign to own a kindred care?
Who will debase his manly mind,
For friendship every fool may share?

In time forbear; amidst the throng
No more so base a thing be seen;
No more so idly pass along;
Be something, any thing, but — mean.

August 20, 1808. [First published, 1809.]

LINES INSCRIBED UPON A CUP FORMED FROM A SKULL

[Byron gave the following account of this cup in his Conversations with Medwin: 'The gardener, in digging, discovered a skull that had probably belonged to some jolly friar or monk of the abbey, about the time it was demonasteried. Observing it to be of giant size, and in a perfect state of preservation, a strange fancy seized me of having it set and mounted as a drinking cup. I accordingly sent it to town, and it returned with a very high polish, and of a mottled colour like tortoiseshell.']

START not — nor deem my spirit fled:
In me behold the only skull,
From which, unlike a living head,
Whatever flows is never dull.

I lived, I loved, I quaff'd, like thee;
I died: let earth my bones resign:
Fill up — thou canst not injure me;
The worm hath fouler lips than thine.

Better to hold the sparkling grape,
Than nurse the earth-worm's slimy brood;
And circle in the goblet's shape
The drink of Gods, than reptile's food.

Where once my wit, perchance, hath shone,
In aid of others' let me shine;
And when, alas! our brains are gone,
What nobler substitute than wine?

Quaff while thou canst: another race,
When thou and thine like me are sped,
May rescue thee from earth's embrace,
And rhyme and revel with the dead.

Why not? since through life's little day
Our heads such sad effects produce;
Redeem'd from worms and wasting clay,
This chance is theirs, to be of use.

Newstead Abbey, 1808.

INSCRIPTION ON THE MONUMENT OF A NEWFOUNDLAND DOG

WHEN some proud son of man returns to earth,
Unknown to glory, but upheld by birth,
The sculptor's art exhausts the pomp of woe,
And storied urns record who rests below;
When all is done, upon the tomb is seen,
Not what he was, but what he should have been.
But the poor dog, in life the firmest friend,
The first to welcome, foremost to defend,
Whose honest heart is still his master's own,
Who labours, fights, lives, breathes for him alone,
Unhonour'd falls, unnoticed all his worth,
Denied in heaven the soul he held on earth:
While man, vain insect! hopes to be forgiven,
And claims himself a sole exclusive heaven.
Oh, man! thou feeble tenant of an hour,
Debased by slavery, or corrupt by power,
Who knows thee well must quit thee with disgust,
Degraded mass of animated dust!
Thy love is lust, thy friendship all a cheat,
Thy smiles hypocrisy, thy words deceit!
By nature vile, ennobled but by name,
Each kindred brute might bid thee blush for shame.
Ye! who perchance behold this simple urn,
Pass on — it honours none you wish to mourn:
To mark a friend's remains these stones arise;
I never knew but one, — and here he lies.

Newstead Abbey, *October* 30, 1808. [First published, 1809.]

'WELL! THOU ART HAPPY'

[These lines were written after dining at Annesley with Mr. and Mrs. Chaworth Musters. On the infant daughter of his fair hostess being brought into the room, he started involuntarily, and with the utmost difficulty suppressed his emotion.]

WELL! thou art happy, and I feel
That I should thus be happy too;
For still my heart regards thy weal
Warmly, as it was wont to do.

Thy husband 's blest — and 't will impart
Some pangs to view his happier lot:
But let them pass — Oh! how my heart
Would hate him, if he loved thee not!

When late I saw thy favourite child,
I thought my jealous heart would break;
But when the unconscious infant smiled,
I kiss'd it for its mother's sake.

I kiss'd it, — and repress'd my sighs
Its father in its face to see;
But then it had its mother's eyes,
And they were all to love and me.

Mary, adieu! I must away:
While thou art blest I 'll not repine;
But near thee I can never stay;
My heart would soon again be thine.

I deem'd that time, I deem'd that pride
Had quench'd at length my boyish flame;
Nor knew, till seated by thy side,
My heart in all — save hope — the same.

Yet was I calm: I knew the time
My breast would thrill before thy look;
But now to tremble were a crime —
We met, — and not a nerve was shook.

I saw thee gaze upon my face,
Yet meet with no confusion there:
One only feeling couldst thou trace,
The sullen calmness of despair.

Away! away! my early dream
Remembrance never must awake:
Oh, where is Lethe's fabled stream?
My foolish heart be still, or break.

November 2, 1808. [First published, 1809.]

TO A LADY

ON BEING ASKED MY REASON FOR QUITTING ENGLAND IN THE SPRING

[Byron expected to sail for India in the spring. The 'lady' of the poem is Mrs. Chaworth Musters.]

When Man, expell'd from Eden's bowers,
A moment linger'd near the gate,
Each scene recall'd the vanish'd hours,
And bade him curse his future fate.

But, wandering on through distant climes,
He learnt to bear his load of grief;
Just gave a sigh to other times,
And found in busier scenes relief.

Thus, lady! will it be with me,
And I must view thy charms no more;
For, while I linger near to thee,
I sigh for all I knew before.

In flight I shall be surely wise,
Escaping from temptation's snare;
I cannot view my paradise
Without the wish of dwelling there.

December 2, 1808. [First published, 1809.]

'FILL THE GOBLET'

A SONG

Fill the goblet again! for I never before
Felt the glow which now gladdens my heart to its core;
Let us drink! — who would not? — since, through life's varied round
In the goblet alone no deception is found.

I have tried in its turn all that life can supply;
I have bask'd in the beam of a dark rolling eye;
I have loved! — who has not? — but what heart can declare
That pleasure existed while passion was there?

In the days of my youth, when the heart 's in its spring,
And dreams that affection can never take wing,
I had friends! — who has not? — but what tongue will avow,
That friends, rosy wine! are so faithful as thou?

The heart of a mistress some boy may estrange,
Friendship shifts with the sunbeam — thou never canst change:
Thou grow'st old — who does not? — but on earth what appears,
Whose virtues, like thine, still increase with its years?

Yet if blest to the utmost that love can bestow,
Should a rival bow down to our idol below,
We are jealous! — who 's not? — thou hast no such alloy;
For the more that enjoy thee, the more we enjoy.

Then the season of youth and its vanities past,
For refuge we fly to the goblet at last;
There we find — do we not? — in the flow of the soul,
That truth, as of yore, is confined to the bowl.

When the box of Pandora was open'd on earth,
And Misery's triumph commenced over Mirth,
Hope was left, — was she not? — but the goblet we kiss,
And care not for Hope, who are certain of bliss.

Long life to the grape! for when summer is flown,
The age of our nectar shall gladden our own:
We must die — who shall not? — May our sins be forgiven,
And Hebe shall never be idle in heaven.

[First published, 1809.]

STANZAS TO A LADY ON LEAVING ENGLAND

[To Mrs. Chaworth Musters.]

'Tis done — and shivering in the gale
The bark unfurls her snowy sail;
And whistling o'er the bending mast
Loud sings on high the fresh'ning blast;
And I must from this land be gone,
Because I cannot love but one.

But could I be what I have been,
And could I see what I have seen —
Could I repose upon the breast
Which once my warmest wishes blest —
I should not seek another zone,
Because I cannot love but one.

'T is long since I beheld that eye
Which gave me bliss or misery;
And I have striven, but in vain,
Never to think of it again:
For though I fly from Albion,
I still can only love but one.

As some lone bird, without a mate,
My weary heart is desolate;
I look around, and cannot trace
One friendly smile or welcome face,
And ev'n in crowds am still alone,
Because I cannot love but one.

And I will cross the whitening foam,
And I will seek a foreign home;
Till I forget a false fair face,
I ne'er shall find a resting-place;
My own dark thoughts I cannot shun,
But ever love, and love but one.

The poorest, veriest wretch on earth
Still finds some hospitable hearth,
Where friendship's or love's softer glow
May smile in joy or soothe in woe;
But friend or leman I have none,
Because I cannot love but one.

I go — but wheresoe'er I flee
There 's not an eye will weep for me;
There 's not a kind congenial heart,
Where I can claim the meanest part;
Nor thou, who hast my hopes undone,
Wilt sigh, although I love but one.

To think of every early scene,
Of what we are, and what we 've been,
Would whelm some softer hearts with woe —
But mine, alas! has stood the blow;
Yet still beats on as it begun,
And never truly loves but one.

And who that dear loved one may be,
Is not for vulgar eyes to see;
And why that early love was crost,
Thou know'st the best, I feel the most;
But few that dwell beneath the sun
Have loved so long, and loved but one.

I 've tried another's fetters too
With charms perchance as fair to view;
And I would fain have loved as well,
But some unconquerable spell
Forbade my bleeding breast to own
A kindred care for aught but one.

'T would soothe to take one lingering view,
And bless thee in my last adieu;
Yet wish I not those eyes to weep
For him that wanders o'er the deep;
His home, his hope, his youth are gone,
Yet still he loves, and loves but one.

1809.

LINES TO MR. HODGSON

WRITTEN ON BOARD THE LISBON PACKET

Huzza! Hodgson, we are going,
Our embargo 's off at last;
Favourable breezes blowing
Bend the canvass o'er the mast.

From aloft the signal 's streaming,
Hark ! the farewell gun is fired;
Women screeching, tars blaspheming,
Tell us that our time 's expired.
Here 's a rascal
Come to task all,
Prying from the custom-house;
Trunks unpacking
Cases cracking,
Not a corner for a mouse
'Scapes unsearch'd amid the racket,
Ere we sail on board the Packet.

Now our boatmen quit their mooring,
And all hands must ply the oar;
Baggage from the quay is lowering,
We 're impatient, — push from shore.
'Have a care ! that case holds liquor —
Stop the boat — I 'm sick — oh Lord !'
'Sick, ma'am, damme, you 'll be sicker,
Ere you 've been an hour on board.'
Thus are screaming
Men and women,
Gemmen, ladies, servants, Jacks;
Here entangling,
All are wrangling,
Stuck together close as wax. —
Such the general noise and racket,
Ere we reach the Lisbon Packet.

Now we 've reach'd her, lo ! the captain,
Gallant Kidd, commands the crew;
Passengers their berths are clapt in,
Some to grumble, some to spew.
'Hey day ! call you that a cabin ?
Why 't is hardly three feet square;
Not enough to stow Queen Mab in —
Who the deuce can harbour there ?'
'Who, sir ? plenty —
Nobles twenty
Did at once my vessel fill.' —
'Did they ? Jesus,
How you squeeze us !
Would to God they did so still:
Then I 'd 'scape the heat and racket
Of the good ship, Lisbon Packet.'

Fletcher ! Murray ! Bob ! where are you ?
Stretch'd along the deck like logs —
Bear a hand, you jolly tar, you !
Here 's a rope's end for the dogs.
Hobhouse muttering fearful curses,
As the hatchway down he rolls,
Now his breakfast, now his verses,
Vomits forth — and damns our souls.
'Here 's a stanza
On Braganza —
Help !' — 'A couplet ?' — 'No, a cup
Of warm water —'
'What 's the matter ?
'Zounds ! my liver 's coming up;
I shall not survive the racket
Of this brutal Lisbon Packet.'

Now at length we 're off for Turkey,
Lord knows when we shall come back !
Breezes foul and tempests murky
May unship us in a crack.
But, since life at most a jest is,
As philosophers allow,
Still to laugh by far the best is,
Then laugh on — as I do now.
Laugh at all things,
Great and small things,
Sick or well, at sea or shore;
While we 're quaffing,
Let 's have laughing —
Who the devil cares for more ? —
Some good wine ! and who would lack it,
Ev'n on board the Lisbon Packet ?

Falmouth Roads, *June* 30, 1809. [First published, 1830.]

LINES WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM, AT MALTA

As o'er the cold sepulchral stone
Some name arrests the passer-by;
Thus, when thou view'st this page alone,
May mine attract thy pensive eye !

And when by thee that name is read,
Perchance in some succeeding year,
Reflect on me as on the dead,
And think my heart is buried here.

September 14, 1809. [First published, 1812.]

TO FLORENCE

[Written at Malta. The same lady, Mrs Spencer Smith, is addressed in the two following poems and in *Childe Harold.*]

Oh Lady ! when I left the shore,
The distant shore which gave me birth,
I hardly thought to grieve once more,
To quit another spot on earth:

Yet here, amidst this barren isle,
Where panting Nature droops the head,
Where only thou art seen to smile,
I view my parting hour with dread.

Though far from Albin's craggy shore,
Divided by the dark-blue main;
A few, brief, rolling seasons o'er,
Perchance I view her cliffs again:

But wheresoe'er I now may roam,
Through scorching clime and varied sea,
Though Time restore me to my home,
I ne'er shall bend mine eyes on thee:

On thee, in whom at once conspire
All charms which heedless hearts can move,
Whom but to see is to admire,
And, oh! forgive the word — to love.

Forgive the word, in one who ne'er
With such a word can more offend;
And since thy heart I cannot share,
Believe me, what I am, thy friend.

And who so cold as look on thee,
Thou lovely wand'rer, and be less?
Nor be, what man should ever be,
The friend of Beauty in distress?

Ah! who would think that form had past
Through Danger's most destructive path,
Had braved the death-wing'd tempest's blast,
And 'scaped a tyrant's fiercer wrath?

Lady! when I shall view the walls
Where free Byzantium once arose,
And Stamboul's Oriental halls
The Turkish tyrants now enclose:

Though mightiest in the lists of fame,
That glorious city still shall be;
On me 't will hold a dearer claim,
As spot of thy nativity.

And though I bid thee now farewell,
When I behold that wondrous scene,
Since where thou art I may not dwell,
'T will soothe to be, where thou hast been.

September, 1809. [First published, 1812.]

STANZAS

COMPOSED DURING A THUNDER-STORM

[This storm occurred on the night of October 11, 1809, when Byron's guides had lost the road to Zitza in Albania.]

Chill and mirk is the nightly blast,
Where Pindus' mountains rise,
And angry clouds are pouring fast
The vengeance of the skies.

Our guides are gone, our hope is lost,
And lightnings, as they play,
But show where rocks our paths have crost,
Or gild the torrent's spray.

Is yon a cot I saw, though low?
When lightning broke the gloom —
How welcome were its shade! — ah, no!
'T is but a Turkish tomb.

Through sounds of foaming waterfalls,
I hear a voice exclaim —
My way-worn countryman, who calls
On distant England's name.

A shot is fired — by foe or friend?
Another — 't is to tell
The mountain-peasants to descend,
And lead us where they dwell.

Oh! who in such a night will dare
To tempt the wilderness?
And who 'mid thunder peals can hear
Our signal of distress?

And who that heard our shouts would rise
To try the dubious road;
Nor rather deem from nightly cries
That outlaws were abroad?

Clouds burst, skies flash, oh, dreadful hour!
More fiercely pours the storm!
Yet here one thought has still the power
To keep my bosom warm.

While wand'ring through each broken path,
O'er brake and craggy brow;
While elements exhaust their wrath,
Sweet Florence, where art thou?

Not on the sea, not on the sea,
Thy bark hath long been gone:

Oh, may the storm that pours on me,
  Bow down my head alone!

Full swiftly blew the swift Siroc,
  When last I press'd thy lip;
And long ere now, with foaming shock,
  Impell'd thy gallant ship.

Now thou art safe; nay, long ere now
  Hast trod the shore of Spain;
'T were hard if aught so fair as thou
  Should linger on the main.

And since I now remember thee
  In darkness and in dread,
As in those hours of revelry
  Which mirth and music sped;

Do thou, amid the fair white walls,
  If Cadiz yet be free,
At times from out her latticed halls
  Look o'er the dark blue sea;

Then think upon Calypso's isles,
  Endear'd by days gone by;
To others give a thousand smiles,
  To me a single sigh.

And when the admiring circle mark
  The paleness of thy face,
A half-form'd tear, a transient spark
  Of melancholy grace,

Again thou 'lt smile, and blushing shun
  Some coxcomb's raillery;
Nor own for once thou thought'st on one,
  Who ever thinks on thee.

Though smile and sigh alike are vain,
  When sever'd hearts repine,
My spirit flies o'er mount and main,
  And mourns in search of thine.
    [First published, 1812.]

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN PASSING THE AMBRACIAN GULF

Through cloudless skies, in silvery sheen,
  Full beams the moon on Actium's coast;
And on these waves, for Egypt's queen,
  The ancient world was won and lost.

And now upon the scene I look,
  The azure grave of many a Roman;
Where stern Ambition once forsook
  His wavering crown to follow woman.

Florence! whom I will love as well
  As ever yet was said or sung
(Since Orpheus sang his spouse from hell),
  Whilst thou art fair and I am young:

Sweet Florence! those were pleasant times,
  When worlds were staked for ladies' eyes:
Had bards as many realms as rhymes,
  Thy charms might raise new Antonies.

Though Fate forbids such things to be,
  Yet, by thine eyes and ringlets curl'd!
I cannot lose a world for thee,
  But would not lose thee for a world.
    November 14, 1809. [First published, 1812.]

'THE SPELL IS BROKE, THE CHARM IS FLOWN'

WRITTEN AT ATHENS, JANUARY 16, 1810

The spell is broke, the charm is flown!
  Thus is it with life's fitful fever:
We madly smile when we should groan;
  Delirium is our best deceiver.

Each lucid interval of thought
  Recalls the woes of Nature's charter;
And he that acts as wise men ought,
  But lives, as saints have died, a martyr.
    [First published, 1812.]

THE GIRL OF CADIZ

[This poem stood in the original manuscript of *Childe Harold* in the place of the stanzas of Canto I. inscribed *To Inez*.]

Oh never talk again to me
  Of northern climes and British ladies;
It has not been your lot to see,
  Like me, the lovely girl of Cadiz.
Although her eye be not of blue,
  Nor fair her locks, like English lasses,
How far its own expressive hue
  The languid azure eye surpasses!

Prometheus-like, from heaven she stole
  The fire, that through those silken lashes

In darkest glances seems to roll,
From eyes that cannot hide their flashes:
And as along her bosom steal
In lengthen'd flow her raven tresses,
You 'd swear each clustering lock could feel,
And curl'd to give her neck caresses.

Our English maids are long to woo,
And frigid even in possession;
And if their charms be fair to view,
Their lips are slow at Love's confession:
But, born beneath a brighter sun,
For love ordain'd the Spanish maid is,
And who, — when fondly, fairly won, —
Enchants you like the Girl of Cadiz?

The Spanish maid is no coquette,
Nor joys to see a lover tremble,
And if she love, or if she hate,
Alike she knows not to dissemble.
Her heart can ne'er be bought or sold —
Howe'er it beats, it beats sincerely;
And, though it will not bend to gold,
'T will love you long and love you dearly.

The Spanish girl that meets your love
Ne'er taunts you with a mock denial,
For every thought is bent to prove
Her passion in the hour of trial.
When thronging foemen menace Spain,
She dares the deed and shares the danger;
And should her lover press the plain,
She hurls the spear, her love's avenger.

And when, beneath the evening star,
She mingles in the gay Bolero,
Or sings to her attuned guitar
Of Christian knight or Moorish hero,
Or counts her beads with fairy hand
Beneath the twinkling rays of Hesper,
Or joins Devotion's choral band,
To chaunt the sweet and hallow'd vesper; —

In each her charms the heart must move
Of all who venture to behold her;
Then let not maids less fair reprove
Because her bosom is not colder:
Through many a clime 't is mine to roam
Where many a soft and melting maid is,
But none abroad, and few at home,
May match the dark-eyed Girl of Cadiz.
[First published, 1832.]

WRITTEN AFTER SWIMMING FROM SESTOS TO ABYDOS

If, in the month of dark December,
Leander, who was nightly wont
(What maid will not the tale remember?)
To cross thy stream, broad Hellespont!

If, when the wintry tempest roar'd,
He sped to Hero, nothing loth,
And thus of old thy current pour'd,
Fair Venus! how I pity both!

For *me*, degenerate modern wretch,
Though in the genial month of May,
My dripping limbs I faintly stretch,
And think I 've done a feat to-day.

But since he cross'd the rapid tide,
According to the doubtful story,
To woo, — and — Lord knows what beside,
And swam for Love, as I for Glory;

'T were hard to say who fared the best:
Sad mortals! thus the Gods still plague you!
He lost his labour, I my jest;
For he was drown'd, and I 've the ague.
May 9, 1810. [First published, 1812.]

'MAID OF ATHENS, ERE WE PART'

Ζώη μοῦ, σάς ἀγαπῶ.

[Supposed to be Theresa Macri, who afterwards married Mr. Black, an Englishman.]

Maid of Athens, ere we part,
Give, oh, give me back my heart!
Or, since that has left my breast,
Keep it now, and take the rest!
Hear my vow before I go,
Ζώη μοῦ, σάς ἀγαπῶ.

By those tresses unconfined,
Woo'd by each Ægean wind;
By those lids whose jetty fringe
Kiss thy soft cheeks' blooming tinge;
By those wild eyes like the roe,
Ζώη μοῦ, σάς ἀγαπῶ.

By that lip I long to taste;
By that zone-encircled waist;

By all the token-flowers that tell
What words can never speak so well;
By love's alternate joy and woe,
Ζώη μοῦ, σάς ἀγαπῶ.

Maid of Athens! I am gone:
Think of me, sweet! when alone.
Though I fly to Istambol,
Athens holds my heart and soul:
Can I cease to love thee? No!
Ζώη μοῦ, σάς ἀγαπῶ.
Athens, 1810. [First published, 1812.]

FRAGMENT FROM THE 'MONK OF ATHOS'

[First published in Noel's *Life of Lord Byron*, 1890. The manuscript was given to the author of the *Life* by S. McCalmont Hill, who inherited it from his great-grandfather, Robert Dallas. The date and occasion of the poem are unknown.]

Beside the confines of the Ægean main,
Where northward Macedonia bounds the flood,
And views opposed the Asiatic plain,
Where once the pride of lofty Ilion stood,
Like the great Father of the giant brood,
With lowering port majestic Athos stands,
Crown'd with the verdure of eternal wood,
As yet unspoil'd by sacrilegious hands,
And throws his mighty shade o'er seas and distant lands.

And deep embosom'd in his shady groves
Full many a convent rears its glittering spire,
Mid scenes where Heavenly Contemplation loves
To kindle in her soul her hallow'd fire,
Where air and sea with rocks and woods conspire
To breathe a sweet religious calm around,
Weaning the thoughts from every low desire,
And the wild waves that break with murmuring sound
Along the rocky shore proclaim it holy ground.

Sequester'd shades where Piety has given
A quiet refuge from each earthly care,
Whence the rapt spirit may ascend to Heaven!
Oh, ye condemn'd the ills of life to bear!
As with advancing age your woes increase,
What bliss amidst these solitudes to share
The happy foretaste of eternal Peace,
Till Heaven in mercy bids your pain and sorrows cease.

LINES WRITTEN BENEATH A PICTURE

[These lines are copied from a leaf of the manuscript of the second canto of *Childe Harold*.]

Dear object of defeated care!
Though now of Love and thee bereft,
To reconcile me with despair
Thine image and my tears are left.

'T is said with Sorrow Time can cope;
But this I feel can ne'er be true;
For by the death-blow of my Hope
My Memory immortal grew.
Athens, *January*, 1811. [First published, 1812.]

SUBSTITUTE FOR AN EPITAPH

Kind Reader! take your choice to cry or laugh;
Here Harold lies — but where 's his Epitaph?
If such you seek, try Westminster, and view
Ten thousand just as fit for him as you.
Athens. [First published, 1832.]

TRANSLATION OF THE FAMOUS GREEK WAR SONG

Δεῦτε παῖδες τῶν Ἑλλήνων

Sons of the Greeks, arise!
The glorious hour 's gone forth,
And, worthy of such ties,
Display who gave us birth.

CHORUS

Sons of Greeks! let us go
In arms against the foe,
Till their hated blood shall flow
In a river past our feet.

Then manfully despising
The Turkish tyrant's yoke,

Let your country see you rising,
  And all her chains are broke.
Brave shades of chiefs and sages,
  Behold the coming strife!
Hellénes of past ages,
  Oh, start again to life!
At the sound of my trumpet, breaking
  Your sleep, oh, join with me!
And the seven-hill'd city seeking,
  Fight, conquer, till we're free.
        Sons of Greeks, etc.

Sparta, Sparta, why in slumbers
  Lethargic dost thou lie?
Awake and join thy numbers
  With Athens, old ally!
Leonidas recalling,
  That chief of ancient song,
Who saved ye once from falling,
  The terrible! the strong!
Who made that bold diversion
  In old Thermopylæ,
And warring with the Persian
  To keep his country free;
With his three hundred waging
  The battle, long he stood,
And like a lion raging,
  Expired in seas of blood.
        Sons of Greeks, etc.

[First published, 1812.]

TRANSLATION OF THE ROMAIC SONG

Μπένω μεσ᾽ τὸ περιβόλι,
Ὡραιοτάτη Χαηδή, κ. τ. λ.

I enter thy garden of roses,
  Beloved and fair Haidée,
Each morning where Flora reposes,
  For surely I see her in thee.
Oh, Lovely! thus low I implore thee,
  Receive this fond truth from my tongue,
Which utters its song to adore thee,
  Yet trembles for what it has sung;
As the branch, at the bidding of Nature,
  Adds fragrance and fruit to the tree,
Through her eyes, through her every feature,
  Shines the soul of the young Haidée.

But the loveliest garden grows hateful
  When Love has abandon'd the bowers;
Bring me hemlock — since mine is ungrateful,
  That herb is more fragrant than flowers.
The poison, when pour'd from the chalice,
  Will deeply embitter the bowl;
But when drunk to escape from thy malice,
  The draught shall be sweet to my soul.
Too cruel! in vain I implore thee
  My heart from these horrors to save:
Will nought to my bosom restore thee?
  Then open the gates of the grave.

As the chief who to combat advances
  Secure of his conquest before,
Thus thou, with those eyes for thy lances,
  Hast pierced through my heart to its core.
Ah, tell me, my soul! must I perish
  By pangs which a smile would dispel?
Would the hope, which thou once bad'st me cherish,
  For torture repay me too well?
Now sad is the garden of roses,
  Beloved but false Haidée!
There Flora all wither'd reposes,
  And mourns o'er thine absence with me.

[First published, 1812.]

LINES WRITTEN IN THE TRAVELLERS' BOOK AT ORCHOMENUS

IN THIS BOOK A TRAVELLER HAD WRITTEN: —

'Fair Albion, smiling, sees her son depart
To trace the birth and nursery of art:
Noble his object, glorious is his aim;
He comes to Athens, and he writes his name.'

BENEATH WHICH LORD BYRON INSERTED THE FOLLOWING: —

The modest bard, like many a bard unknown,
Rhymes on our names, but wisely hides his own;
But yet, whoe'er he be, to say no worse,
His name would bring more credit than his verse.

1810. [First published, 1830.]

ON PARTING

The kiss, dear maid! thy lip has left
  Shall never part from mine,
Till happier hours restore the gift
  Untainted back to thine.

Thy parting glance, which fondly beams,
  An equal love may see;
The tear that from thine eyelid streams
  Can weep no change in me.

I ask no pledge to make me blest
  In gazing when alone;
Nor one memorial for a breast,
  Whose thoughts are all thine own.

Nor need I write — to tell the tale
  My pen were doubly weak:
Oh! what can idle words avail,
  Unless the heart could speak?

By day or night, in weal or woe,
  That heart, no longer free,
Must bear the love it cannot show,
  And silent ache for thee.

March, 1811. [First published, 1812.]

EPITAPH FOR JOSEPH BLACKET

LATE POET AND SHOEMAKER

Stranger! behold, interr'd together,
The *souls* of learning and of leather.
Poor Joe is gone, but left his *all*:
You 'll find his relics in a *stall*.
His works were neat, and often found
Well stitch'd, and with *morocco* bound.
Tread lightly — where the bard is laid
He cannot mend the shoe he made;
Yet is he happy in his hole,
With verse immortal as his *sole*.
But still to business he held fast,
And stuck to Phœbus to the *last*.
Then who shall say so good a fellow
Was only 'leather and prunella?'
For character — he did not lack it;
And if he did, 't were shame to 'Black-it.'

Malta, *May* 16, 1811. [First published, 1832.]

FAREWELL TO MALTA

Adieu, ye joys of La Valette!
Adieu, sirocco, sun, and sweat!
Adieu, thou palace rarely enter'd!
Adieu, ye mansions where — I 've ventured!
Adieu, ye cursed streets of stairs!
(How surely he who mounts you swears!)
Adieu, ye merchants often failing!
Adieu, thou mob for ever railing!
Adieu, ye packets — without letters!
Adieu, ye fools — who ape your betters!
Adieu, thou damned'st quarantine,
That gave me fever, and the spleen!
Adieu that stage which makes us yawn, sirs,
Adieu his Excellency's dancers!
Adieu to Peter — whom no fault 's in,
But could not teach a colonel waltzing;
Adieu, ye females fraught with graces!
Adieu, red coats, and redder faces!
Adieu, the supercilious air
Of all that strut 'en militaire!'
I go — but God knows when, or why,
To smoky towns and cloudy sky,
To things (the honest truth to say)
As bad — but in a different way.

Farewell to these, but not adieu,
Triumphant sons of truest blue!
While either Adriatic shore,
And fallen chiefs, and fleets no more,
And nightly smiles, and daily dinners,
Proclaim you war and women's winners.
Pardon my Muse, who apt to prate is,
And take my rhyme — because 't is 'gratis.'

And now I 've got to Mrs. Fraser,
Perhaps you think I mean to praise her —
And were I vain enough to think
My praise was worth this drop of ink,
A line — or two — were no hard matter,
As here, indeed, I need not flatter:
But she must be content to shine
In better praises than in mine,
With lively air, and open heart,
And fashion's ease, without its art;
Her hours can gaily glide along,
Nor ask the aid of idle song.

And now, O Malta! since thou 'st got us,
Thou little military hothouse!
I 'll not offend with words uncivil,
And wish thee rudely at the Devil,
But only stare from out my casement,
And ask, for what is such a place meant?
Then, in my solitary nook,
Return to scribbling, or a book,
Or take my physic while I 'm able
(Two spoonfuls hourly by the label),
Prefer my nightcap to my beaver,
And bless the gods — I 've got a fever!

May 26, 1811. [First published, 1816.]

NEWSTEAD ABBEY

[These stanzas, written after Byron's return to England from Malta, were first published in the *Memoir* of F. Hodgson in 1878.]

In the dome of my Sires as the clear moonbeam falls
Through Silence and Shade o'er its desolate walls,
It shines from afar like the glories of old;
It gilds, but it warms not — 't is dazzling, but cold.

Let the Sunbeam be bright for the younger of days:
'T is the light that should shine on a race that decays,
When the Stars are on high and the dews on the ground,
And the long shadow lingers the ruin around.

And the step that o'erechoes the gray floor of stone
Falls sullenly now, for 't is only my own;
And sunk are the voices that sounded in mirth,
And empty the goblet, and dreary the hearth.

And vain was each effort to raise and recall
The brightness of old to illumine our Hall;
And vain was the hope to avert our decline,
And the fate of my fathers had faded to mine.

And theirs was the wealth and the fulness of Fame,
And mine to inherit too haughty a name;
And theirs were the times and the triumphs of yore,
And mine to regret, but renew them no more.

And Ruin is fix'd on my tower and my wall,
Too hoary to fade, and too massy to fall;
It tells not of Time's or the tempest's decay,
But the wreck of the line that have held it in sway.

August 26, 1811.

EPISTLE TO A FRIEND

IN ANSWER TO SOME LINES EXHORTING THE AUTHOR TO BE CHEERFUL, AND TO 'BANISH CARE'

'Oh! banish care' — such ever be
The motto of *thy* revelry!
Perchance of *mine*, when wassail nights
Renew those riotous delights,
Wherewith the children of Despair
Lull the lone heart, and 'banish care.'
But not in morn's reflecting hour,
When present, past, and future lower,
When all I loved is changed or gone,
Mock with such taunts the woes of one,
Whose every thought — but let them pass —
Thou know'st I am not what I was.
But, above all, if thou wouldst hold
Place in a heart that ne'er was cold,
By all the powers that men revere,
By all unto thy bosom dear,
Thy joys below, thy hopes above,
Speak — speak of anything but love.

'T were long to tell, and vain to hear,
The tale of one who scorns a tear;
And there is little in that tale
Which better bosoms would bewail;
But mine has suffer'd more than well
'T would suit philosophy to tell.
I 've seen my bride another's bride, —
Have seen her seated by his side, —
Have seen the infant, which she bore,
Wear the sweet smile the mother wore,
When she and I in youth have smiled,
As fond and faultless as her child; —
Have seen her eyes, in cold disdain,
Ask if I felt no secret pain;
And *I* have acted well my part,
And made my cheek belie my heart,
Return'd the freezing glance she gave,
Yet felt the while *that* woman's slave; —
Have kiss'd, as if without design,
The babe which ought to have been mine,
And show'd, alas! in each caress
Time had not made me love the less.

But let this pass — I 'll whine no more,
Nor seek again an eastern shore;
The world befits a busy brain, —
I 'll hie me to its haunts again.
But if, in some succeeding year,
When Britain's 'May is in the sere,'
Thou hear'st of one, whose deepening crimes

Suit with the sablest of the times,
Of one, whom love nor pity sways,
Nor hope of fame, nor good men's praise,
One, who in stern ambition's pride,
Perchance not blood shall turn aside,
One rank'd in some recording page
With the worst anarchs of the age,
Him wilt thou *know* — and *knowing* pause,
Nor with the *effect* forget the cause.

Newstead Abbey, *October* 11, 1811. [First published, 1830.]

TO THYRZA

[There is evidence in Byron's letters and conversations that 'Thyrza' was a real person, but the mystery of her identity has never been solved.]

Without a stone to mark the spot,
And say what Truth might well have said,
By all, save one, perchance forgot,
Ah ! wherefore art thou lowly laid ?

By many a shore and many a sea
Divided, yet beloved in vain;
The past, the future fled to thee
To bid us meet — no — ne'er again !

Could this have been — a word, a look
That softly said, 'We part in peace,'
Had taught my bosom how to brook,
With fainter sighs, thy soul's release.

And didst thou not, since Death for thee
Prepared a light and pangless dart,
Once long for him thou ne'er shalt see,
Who held, and holds thee in his heart ?

Oh ! who like him had watch'd thee here ?
Or sadly mark'd thy glazing eye,
In that dread hour ere death appear,
When silent sorrow fears to sigh,

Till all was past ? But when no more
'T was thine to reck of human woe,
Affection's heart-drops, gushing o'er,
Had flow'd as fast — as now they flow.

Shall they not flow, when many a day
In these, to me, deserted towers,
Ere call'd but for a time away,
Affection's mingling tears were ours ?

Ours too the glance none saw beside,
The smile none else might understand;
The whisper'd thought of hearts allied,
The pressure of the thrilling hand;

The kiss, so guiltless and refined
That Love each warmer wish forbore;
Those eyes proclaim'd so pure a mind,
Even passion blush'd to plead for more.

The tone, that taught me to rejoice,
When prone, unlike thee, to repine;
The song, celestial from thy voice,
But sweet to me from none but thine;

The pledge we wore — I wear it still,
But where is thine ? — Ah ! where art thou ?
Oft have I borne the weight of ill,
But never bent beneath till now !

Well hast thou left in life's best bloom
The cup of woe for me to drain.
If rest alone be in the tomb,
I would not wish thee here again;

But if in worlds more blest than this
Thy virtues seek a fitter sphere,
Impart some portion of thy bliss,
To wean me from mine anguish here.

Teach me — too early taught by thee !
To bear, forgiving and forgiven:
On earth thy love was such to me,
It fain would form my hope in heaven !

October 11, 1811. [First published, 1812.]

'AWAY, AWAY, YE NOTES OF WOE!'

[Written, as Byron states in a letter (December 8, 1811), 'on hearing a song of former days.']

Away, away, ye notes of woe !
Be silent, thou once soothing strain,
Or I must flee from hence — for, oh !
I dare not trust those sounds again.
To me they speak of brighter days —
But lull the chords, for now, alas !
I must not think, I may not gaze
On what I am — on what I was.

The voice that made those sounds more sweet
Is hush'd, and all their charms are fled;

And now their softest notes repeat
A dirge, an anthem o'er the dead!
Yes, Thyrza! yes, they breathe of thee,
Belovèd dust! since dust thou art;
And all that once was harmony
Is worse than discord to my heart!

'T is silent all! — but on my ear
The well-remember'd echoes thrill;
I hear a voice I would not hear,
A voice that now might well be still:
Yet oft my doubting soul 't will shake;
Even slumber owns its gentle tone,
Till consciousness will vainly wake
To listen, though the dream be flown.

Sweet Thyrza! waking as in sleep,
Thou art but now a lovely dream;
A star that trembled o'er the deep,
Then turn'd from earth its tender beam.
But he who through life's dreary way
Must pass, when heaven is veil'd in wrath,
Will long lament the vanish'd ray
That scatter'd gladness o'er his path.

December 6, 1811. [First published, 1812.]

'ONE STRUGGLE MORE, AND I AM FREE'

One struggle more, and I am free
From pangs that rend my heart in twain;
One last long sigh to love and thee,
Then back to busy life again.
It suits me well to mingle now
With things that never pleased before:
Though every joy is fled below,
What future grief can touch me more?

Then bring me wine, the banquet bring;
Man was not form'd to live alone:
I 'll be that light, unmeaning thing
That smiles with all, and weeps with none.
It was not thus in days more dear,
It never would have been, but thou
Hast fled, and left me lonely here;
Thou 'rt nothing, — all are nothing now.

In vain my lyre would lightly breathe!
The smile that sorrow fain would wear
But mocks the woe that lurks beneath,
Like roses o'er a sepulchre.
Though gay companions o'er the bowl
Dispel awhile the sense of ill;
Though pleasure fires the maddening soul,
The heart — the heart is lonely still!

On many a lone and lovely night
It soothed to gaze upon the sky;
For then I deem'd the heavenly light
Shone sweetly on thy pensive eye:
And oft I thought at Cynthia's noon,
When sailing o'er the Ægean wave,
'Now Thyrza gazes on that moon —'
Alas, it gleam'd upon her grave!

When stretch'd on fever's sleepless bed,
And sickness shrunk my throbbing veins,
''T is comfort still,' I faintly said,
'That Thyrza cannot know my pains:'
Like freedom to the time-worn slave,
A boon 't is idle then to give,
Relenting Nature vainly gave
My life, when Thyrza ceased to live!

My Thyrza's pledge in better days,
When love and life alike were new!
How different now thou meet'st my gaze!
How tinged by time with sorrow's hue!
The heart that gave itself with thee
Is silent — ah, were mine as still!
Though cold as e'en the dead can be,
It feels, it sickens with the chill.

Thou bitter pledge! thou mournful token!
Though painful, welcome to my breast!
Still, still, preserve that love unbroken,
Or break the heart to which thou 'rt press'd!
Time tempers love, but not removes,
More hallow'd when its hope is fled:
Oh! what are thousand living loves
To that which cannot quit the dead?

[First published, 1812.]

EUTHANASIA

When Time, or soon or late, shall bring
The dreamless sleep that lulls the dead,
Oblivion! may thy languid wing
Wave gently o'er my dying bed!

No band of friends or heirs be there,
To weep or wish the coming blow;
No maiden, with dishevell'd hair,
To feel, or feign, decorous woe.

But silent let me sink to earth,
With no officious mourners near:

I would not mar one hour of mirth,
  Nor startle friendship with a fear.

Yet Love, if Love in such an hour
  Could nobly check its useless sighs,
Might then exert its latest power
  In her who lives and him who dies.

'T were sweet, my Psyche ! to the last
  Thy features still serene to see:
Forgetful of its struggles past,
  E'en Pain itself should smile on thee.

But vain the wish — for Beauty still
  Will shrink, as shrinks the ebbing breath;
And woman's tears, produced at will,
  Deceive in life, unman in death.

Then lonely be my latest hour,
  Without regret, without a groan;
For thousands Death hath ceased to lower,
  And pain been transient or unknown.

'Ay, but to die, and go,' alas !
  Where all have gone, and all must go !
To be the nothing that I was
  Ere born to life and living woe !

Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
  Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
And know, whatever thou hast been,
  'T is something better not to be.

[First published, 1812.]

'AND THOU ART DEAD, AS YOUNG AND FAIR'

Heu, quanto minus est cum reliquis versari quam tui meminisse !

AND thou art dead, as young and fair
  As aught of mortal birth;
And form so soft, and charms so rare,
  Too soon return'd to Earth !
Though Earth received them in her bed,
And o'er the spot the crowd may tread
  In carelessness or mirth,
There is an eye which could not brook
A moment on that grave to look.

I will not ask where thou liest low,
  Nor gaze upon the spot;
There flowers or weeds at will may grow,
  So I behold them not:
It is enough for me to prove
That what I loved, and long must love,
  Like common earth can rot;
To me there needs no stone to tell,
'T is Nothing that I loved so well.

Yet did I love thee to the last
  As fervently as thou,
Who didst not change through all the past
  And canst not alter now.
The love where Death has set his seal,
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
  Nor falsehood disavow:
And, what were worse, thou canst not see
Or wrong, or change, or fault in me.

The better days of life were ours;
  The worst can be but mine:
The sun that cheers, the storm that lowers,
  Shall never more be thine.
The silence of that dreamless sleep
I envy now too much to weep;
  Nor need I to repine
That all those charms have pass'd away,
I might have watch'd through long decay.

The flower in ripen'd bloom unmatch'd
  Must fall the earliest prey;
Though by no hand untimely snatch'd,
  The leaves must drop away:
And yet it were a greater grief
To watch it withering, leaf by leaf,
  Than see it pluck'd to-day;
Since earthly eye but ill can bear
To trace the change to foul from fair.

I know not if I could have borne
  To see thy beauties fade;
The night that follow'd such a morn
  Had worn a deeper shade:
Thy day without a cloud hath pass'd,
And thou wert lovely to the last,
  Extinguish'd, not decay'd;
As stars that shoot along the sky
Shine brightest as they fall from high.

As once I wept, if I could weep,
  My tears might well be shed,
To think I was not near to keep
  One vigil o'er thy bed;
To gaze, how fondly ! on thy face,
To fold thee in a faint embrace,
  Uphold thy drooping head;
And show that love, however vain,
Nor thou nor I can feel again.

Yet how much less it were to gain,
Though thou hast left me free,
The loveliest things that still remain,
Than thus remember thee!
The all of thine that cannot die
Through dark and dread Eternity
Returns again to me,
And more thy buried love endears
Than aught, except its living years.

February, 1812. [First published, 1812.]

LINES TO A LADY WEEPING

Weep, daughter of a royal line,
A Sire's disgrace, a realm's decay;
Ah! happy if each tear of thine
Could wash a father's fault away!

Weep — for thy tears are Virtue's tears —
Auspicious to these suffering isles;
And be each drop in future years
Repaid thee by thy people's smiles!

March 7, 1812.

'IF SOMETIMES IN THE HAUNTS OF MEN'

If sometimes in the haunts of men
Thine image from my breast may fade,
The lonely hour presents again
The semblance of thy gentle shade:
And now that sad and silent hour
Thus much of thee can still restore,
And sorrow unobserved may pour
The plaint she dare not speak before.

Oh, pardon that in crowds awhile
I waste one thought I owe to thee,
And, self-condemn'd, appear to smile,
Unfaithful to thy Memory!
Nor deem that memory less dear,
That then I seem not to repine;
I would not fools should overhear
One sigh that should be wholly *thine.*

If not the goblet pass unquaff'd,
It is not drain'd to banish care;
The cup must hold a deadlier draught,
That brings a Lethe for despair.
And could Oblivion set my soul
From all her troubled visions free,
I'd dash to earth the sweetest bowl
That drown'd a single thought of thee.

For wert thou vanish'd from my mind,
Where could my vacant bosom turn?
And who would then remain behind
To honour thine abandon'd Urn?
No, no — it is my sorrow's pride
That last dear duty to fulfil;
Though all the world forget beside,
'T is meet that I remember still.

For well I know, that such had been
Thy gentle care for him, who now
Unmourn'd shall quit this mortal scene,
Where none regarded him but thou:
And, oh, I feel in *that* was given
A blessing never meant for me;
Thou wert too like a dream of Heaven,
For earthly Love to merit thee.

March 14, 1812.

ON A CORNELIAN HEART WHICH WAS BROKEN

[Probably referring to the Cornelian Heart of the poem on page 113.]

Ill-fated Heart! and can it be
That thou shouldst thus be rent in twain?
Have years of care for thine and thee
Alike been all employ'd in vain?

Yet precious seems each shatter'd part,
And every fragment dearer grown,
Since he who wears thee feels thou art
A fitter emblem of *his own.*

March 16, 1812.

'THE CHAIN I GAVE'

FROM THE TURKISH

The chain I gave was fair to view,
The lute I added sweet in sound;
The heart that offer'd both was true,
And ill deserved the fate it found.

These gifts were charm'd by secret spell
Thy truth in absence to divine;
And they have done their duty well, —
Alas! they could not teach thee thine.

That chain was firm in every link,
But not to bear a stranger's touch;

That lute was sweet — till thou couldst think
In other hands its notes were such.

Let him, who from thy neck unbound
The chain which shiver'd in his grasp,
Who saw that lute refuse to sound,
Restring the chords, renew the clasp.

When thou wert changed, they alter'd too;
The chain is broke, the music mute:
'T is past — to them and thee adieu —
False heart, frail chain, and silent lute.

[First published, 1814.]

LINES WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF OF THE 'PLEASURES OF MEMORY'

Absent or present, still to thee,
My friend, what magic spells belong!
As all can tell, who share, like me,
In turn thy converse and thy song.

And when the dreaded hour shall come
By Friendship ever deem'd too nigh,
And 'Memory' o'er her Druid's tomb
Shall weep that aught of thee can die,

How fondly will she then repay
Thy homage offer'd at her shrine,
And blend, while ages roll away,
Her name immortally with *thine!*

April 19, 1812. [First published, 1816.]

ADDRESS

SPOKEN AT THE OPENING OF DRURY-LANE THEATRE, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1812

[Drury-Lane Theatre had burned down February 24, 1809, and Byron had himself viewed the fire from 'a house-top in Covent Garden.' The managers advertised a general competition of addresses for the opening of the restored edifice, and scores of poems, all intolerably poor, were submitted. Lord Holland, in despair, finally appealed to Byron for an address, and the following verses of his were spoken by Mr. Elliston. The *Rejected Addresses* has made the occasion ever memorable.]

In one dread night our city saw, and sigh'd,
Bow'd to the dust the Drama's tower of pride;
In one short hour beheld the blazing fane,
Apollo sink, and Shakspeare cease to reign.

Ye who beheld (oh! sight admired and mourn'd,
Whose radiance mock'd the ruin it adorn'd!),
Through clouds of fire the massy fragments riven,
Like Israel's pillar, chase the night from heaven;
Saw the long column of revolving flames
Shake its red shadow o'er the startled Thames,
While thousands, throng'd around the burning dome,
Shrank back appall'd, and trembled for their home,
As glared the volumed blaze, and ghastly shone
The skies with lightnings awful as their own,
Till blackening ashes and the lonely wall
Usurp'd the Muse's realm, and mark'd her fall;
Say — shall this new, nor less aspiring pile,
Rear'd where once rose the mightiest in our isle,
Know the same favour which the former knew,
A shrine for Shakspeare — worthy him and *you?*

Yes — it shall be — the magic of that name
Defies the scythe of time, the torch of flame;
On the same spot still consecrates the scene,
And bids the Drama *be* where she hath *been:*
This fabric's birth attests the potent spell —
Indulge our honest pride, and say, *How well!*

As soars this fane to emulate the last,
Oh! might we draw our omens from the past,
Some hour propitious to our prayers may boast
Names such as hallow still the dome we lost.
On Drury first your Siddons' thrilling art
O'erwhelm'd the gentlest, storm'd the sternest heart:
On Drury, Garrick's latest laurels grew;
Here your last tears retiring Roscius drew.

Sigh'd his last thanks, and wept his last adieu:
But still for living wit the wreaths may bloom
That only waste their odours o'er the tomb.
Such Drury claim'd and claims — nor you refuse
One tribute to revive his slumbering muse;
With garlands deck your own Menander's head!
Nor hoard your honours idly for the dead!

Dear are the days which made our annals bright,
Ere Garrick fled, or Brinsley ceased to write.
Heirs to their labours, like all high-born heirs,
Vain of *our* ancestry as they of *theirs;*
While thus Remembrance borrows Banquo's glass
To claim the sceptred shadows as they pass,
And we the mirror hold, where imaged shine
Immortal names, emblazon'd on our line,
Pause — ere their feebler offspring you condemn,
Reflect how hard the task to rival them!

Friends of the stage! to whom both Players and Plays
Must sue alike for pardon or for praise,
Whose judging voice and eye alone direct
The boundless power to cherish or reject;
If e'er frivolity has led to fame,
And made us blush that you forbore to blame;
If e'er the sinking stage could condescend
To soothe the sickly taste it dare not mend,
All past reproach may present scenes refute,
And censure, wisely loud, be justly mute!
Oh! since your fiat stamps the Drama's laws,
Forbear to mock us with misplaced applause;
So pride shall doubly nerve the actor's powers,
And reason's voice be echo'd back by ours!

This greeting o'er, the ancient rule obey'd,
The Drama's homage by her herald paid,
Receive *our* welcome too, whose every tone
Springs from our hearts, and fain would win your own.
The curtain rises — may our stage unfold
Scenes not unworthy Drury's days of old!
Britons our judges, Nature for our guide,
Still may *we* please — long, long may *you* preside!

PARENTHETICAL ADDRESS

BY DR. PLAGIARY

[Among the rejected addresses was one by Dr. Busby which his son attempted to recite on the stage by force on October 14. He was taken into custody for his pains, but on the next night Dr. Busby obtained a hearing for his son. Byron in the satire below ridicules the ineffective delivery of the young man whose voice was quite 'inarticulate.' He introduces the verses with these words:] *Half stolen*, with acknowledgments, to be spoken in an inarticulate voice by Master B. at the opening of the next new theatre. Stolen parts marked with the inverted commas of quotation — thus '——'.

'When energising objects men pursue,'
Then Lord knows what is writ by Lord knows who.
'A modest monologue you here survey,'
Hiss'd from the theatre the 'other day,'
As if Sir Fretful wrote 'the slumberous' verse,
And gave his son 'the rubbish' to rehearse.
'Yet at the thing you'd never be amazed,'
Knew you the rumpus which the author raised;
'Nor even here your smiles would be represt,'
Knew you these lines — the badness of the best.
'Flame! fire! and flame!!' (words borrow'd from *Lucretius*),
'Dread metaphors, which open wounds' like issues!
'And sleeping pangs awake — and — but away!'
(Confound me if I know what next to say).
'Lo, Hope reviving re-expands her wings,'
And Master G—— recites what Doctor Busby sings! —
'If mighty things with small we may compare'
(Translated from the grammar for the fair!),
Dramatic 'spirit drives a conquering car,'
And burn'd poor Moscow like a tub of 'tar.'

'This spirit Wellington has shown in Spain,'
To furnish melo-drames for Drury Lane.
'Another Marlborough points to Blenheim's story,'
And George and I will dramatise it for ye.

'In arts and sciences our isle hath shone'
(This deep discovery is mine alone).
'O British poesy, whose powers inspire'
My verse — or I 'm a fool — and Fame 's a liar,
'Thee we invoke, your sister arts implore'
With 'smiles,' and 'lyres,' and 'pencils,' and much more.
These, if we win the Graces, too, we gain
Disgraces, too! 'inseparable train!'
'Three who have stolen their witching airs from Cupid'
(You all know what I mean, unless you 're stupid):
'Harmonious throng' that I have kept *in petto*,
Now to produce in a 'divine *sestetto!!*'
'While Poesy,' with these delightful doxies,
'Sustains her part' in all the 'upper' boxes!
'Thus lifted gloriously, you 'll sweep along,'
Borne in the vast balloon of Busby's song;
'Shine in your farce, masque, scenery, and play'
(For this last line George had a holiday).
'Old Drury never, never soar'd so high,'
So says the manager, and so say I.
'But hold, you say, this self-complacent boast;'
Is this the poem which the public lost?
'True — true — that lowers at once our mounting pride;'
But lo! — the papers print what you deride.
''T is ours to look on you — you hold the prize,'
'T is *twenty guineas*, as they advertise!
'A double blessing your rewards impart' —
I wish I had them, then, with all my heart!
'Our *twofold* feeling *owns* its twofold cause,'
Why son and I both beg for your applause.
'When in your fostering beams you bid us live,'
My next subscription-list shall say how much you give!

October, 1812.

VERSES FOUND IN A SUMMER-HOUSE AT HALES-OWEN

When Dryden's fool, 'unknowing what he sought,'
His hours in whistling spent, 'for want of thought,'
This guiltless oaf his vacancy of sense
Supplied, and amply too, by innocence;
Did modern swains, possess'd of Cymon's powers,
In Cymon's manner waste their leisure hours,
The offended guests would not, with blushing, see
These fair green walks disgraced by infamy.
Severe the fate of modern fools, alas!
When vice and folly mark them as they pass.
Like noxious reptiles o'er the whiten'd wall,
The filth they leave still points out where they crawl.

[First published, 1832.]

'REMEMBER THEE! REMEMBER!'

[Lady Caroline Lamb 'called one morning at her quondam lover's apartments. His lordship was from home; but finding *Vathek* on the table, the lady wrote in the first page of the volume the words, "Remember me!" Byron immediately wrote under the ominous warning these two stanzas.' — Medwin, *Conversations of Lord Byron*, 1824, pp. 329, 330.]

Remember thee! remember thee!
Till Lethe quench life's burning stream
Remorse and Shame shall cling to thee,
And haunt thee like a feverish dream!

Remember thee! Aye, doubt it not.
Thy husband too shall think of thee:
By neither shalt thou be forgot,
Thou *false* to him, thou *fiend* to me!

TO TIME

Time! on whose arbitrary wing
The varying hours must flag or fly,
Whose tardy winter, fleeting spring,
But drag or drive us on to die —

Hail thou! who on my birth bestow'd
Those boons to all that know thee known;
Yet better I sustain thy load,
For now I bear the weight alone.

I would not one fond heart should share
The bitter moments thou hast given;
And pardon thee, since thou couldst spare
All that I loved, to peace or heaven.

To them be joy or rest, on me
Thy future ills shall press in vain:
I nothing owe but years to thee,
A debt already paid in pain.

Yet even that pain was some relief;
It felt, but still forgot thy power:
The active agony of grief
Retards, but never counts the hour.

In joy I 've sigh'd to think thy flight
Would soon subside from swift to slow;
Thy cloud could overcast the light,
But could not add a night to woe;

For then, however drear and dark,
My soul was suited to thy sky;
One star alone shot forth a spark
To prove thee — not Eternity.

That beam hath sunk, and now thou art
A blank; a thing to count and curse
Through each dull tedious trifling part,
Which all regret, yet all rehearse.

One scene even thou canst not deform;
The limit of thy sloth or speed
When future wanderers bear the storm
Which we shall sleep too sound to heed:

And I can smile to think how weak
Thine efforts shortly shall be shown,
When all the vengeance thou canst wreak
Must fall upon — a nameless stone.
[First published, 1814.]

TRANSLATION OF A ROMAIC LOVE SONG

Ah! Love was never yet without
The pang, the agony, the doubt,
Which rends my heart with ceaseless sigh,
While day and night roll darkling by.

Without one friend to hear my woe,
I faint, I die beneath the blow.
That Love had arrows, well I knew;
Alas! I find them poison'd too.

Birds, yet in freedom, shun the net
Which Love around your haunts hath set;
Or, circled by his fatal fire,
Your hearts shall burn, your hopes expire.

A bird of free and careless wing
Was I, through many a smiling spring;
But caught within the subtle snare,
I burn, and feebly flutter there.

Who ne'er have loved, and loved in vain,
Can neither feel nor pity pain,
The cold repulse, the look askance,
The lightning of Love's angry glance.

In flattering dreams I deem'd thee mine;
Now hope, and he who hoped, decline;
Like melting wax, or withering flower,
I feel my passion and thy power.

My light of life! ah, tell me why
That pouting lip and alter'd eye?
My bird of love! my beauteous mate!
And art thou changed, and canst thou hate?

Mine eyes like wintry streams o'erflow:
What wretch with me would barter woe?
My bird! relent: one note could give
A charm, to bid thy lover live.

My curdling blood, my madd'ning brain,
In silent anguish I sustain;
And still thy heart, without partaking
One pang, exults — while mine is breaking.

Pour me the poison; fear not thou!
Thou canst not murder more than now:
I 've lived to curse my natal day,
And Love, that thus can lingering slay.

My wounded soul, my bleeding breast,
Can patience preach thee into rest?
Alas! too late, I dearly know
That joy is harbinger of woe.
[First published, 1814.]

'THOU ART NOT FALSE, BUT THOU ART FICKLE'

Thou art not false, but thou art fickle,
To those thyself so fondly sought;
The tears that thou hast forced to trickle
Are doubly bitter from that thought:

'T is this which breaks the heart thou grievest,
Too well thou lov'st — too soon thou leavest.

The wholly false the heart despises,
And spurns deceiver and deceit;
But she who not a thought disguises,
Whose love is as sincere as sweet, —
When she can change who loved so truly,
It feels what mine has felt so newly.

To dream of joy and wake to sorrow
Is doom'd to all who love or live;
And if, when conscious on the morrow,
We scarce our fancy can forgive,
That cheated us in slumber only
To leave the waking soul more lonely,

What must they feel whom no false vision,
But truest, tenderest passion warm'd?
Sincere, but swift in sad transition,
As if a dream alone had charm'd?
Ah! sure such grief is fancy's scheming,
And all thy change can be but dreaming!
[First published, 1814.]

ON BEING ASKED WHAT WAS THE 'ORIGIN OF LOVE'

The 'Origin of Love!' — Ah! why
That cruel question ask of me,
When thou mayst read in many an eye
He starts to life on seeing thee?

And shouldst thou seek his *end* to know:
My heart forebodes, my fears foresee,
He 'll linger long in silent woe;
But live — until I cease to be.
[First published, 1814.]

ON THE QUOTATION

'And my true faith can alter never,
Though thou art gone perhaps forever.'

[First printed in the Edition of 1898 from a manuscript in possession of Mr. Murray.]

And 'thy true faith can alter never?' —
Indeed it lasted for a — week!
I know the length of Love's forever,
And just expected such a freak.
In peace we met, in peace we parted,
In peace we vow'd to meet again,
And though I find thee fickle-hearted
No pang of mine shall make thee vain.

One gone — 't was time to seek a second;
In sooth 't were hard to blame thy haste.
And whatsoe'er thy love be reckon'd,
At least thou hast improved in taste:
Though one was young, the next was younger,
His love was new, mine too well known —
And what might make the charm still stronger,
The youth was present, I was flown.

Seven days and nights of single sorrow!
Too much for human constancy!
A fortnight past, why then to-morrow
His turn is come to follow me:
And if each week you change a lover,
And so have acted heretofore,
Before a year or two is over
We 'll form a very pretty *corps*.

Adieu, fair thing! without upbraiding
I fain would take a decent leave;
Thy beauty still survives unfading,
And undeceived may long deceive.
With him unto thy bosom dearer
Enjoy the moments as they flee;
I only wish his love sincerer
Than thy young heart has been to me.
1812.

TO THE HON. MRS. GEORGE LAMB

The sacred song that on mine ear
Yet vibrates from that voice of thine,
I heard, before, from one so dear —
'T is strange it still appears divine.

But, oh! so sweet that *look* and *tone*
To her and thee alike is given;
It seem'd as if for me alone
That *both* had been recall'd from Heaven!

And though I never can redeem
The vision thus endear'd to me;
I scarcely can regret my dream,
When realised again by thee.
1812. [First published, 1898.]

[LA REVANCHE]

[First published in the Edition of 1904 from a manuscript in the possession of Mr. Murray. It is dated by conjecture 1812.]

There is no more for me to hope,
  There is no more for thee to fear;
And, if I give my Sorrow scope,
  That Sorrow thou shalt never hear.
  Why did I hold thy love so dear?
  Why shed for such a heart one tear?
Let deep and dreary silence be
My only memory of thee!

When all are fled who flatter now,
  Save thoughts which will not flatter then;
And thou recall'st the broken vow
  To him who must not love again—
  Each hour of now forgotten years
  Thou, then, shalt number with thy tears;
And every drop of grief shall be
A vain remembrancer of me!

'REMEMBER HIM WHOM PASSION'S POWER'

[Mr. Coleridge in the new Murray edition suggests that these stanzas were addressed to Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster.]

Remember him whom passion's power
  Severely, deeply, vainly proved:
Remember thou that dangerous hour
  When neither fell, though both were loved.

That yielding breast, that melting eye,
  Too much invited to be bless'd:
That gentle prayer, that pleading sigh,
  The wilder wish reproved, repress'd.

Oh! let me feel that all I lost
  But saved thee all that conscience fears;
And blush for every pang it cost
  To spare the vain remorse of years.

Yet think of this when many a tongue,
  Whose busy accents whisper blame,
Would do the heart that loved thee wrong,
  And brand a nearly blighted name.

Think that, whate'er to others, thou
  Hast seen each selfish thought subdued:
I bless thy purer soul even now,
  Even now, in midnight solitude.

O God! that we had met in time,
  Our hearts as fond, thy hand more free;
When thou hadst loved without a crime,
  And I been less unworthy thee!

Far may thy days, as heretofore,
  From this our gaudy world be past!
And that too bitter moment o'er,
  Oh, may such trial be thy last!

This heart, alas! perverted long,
  Itself destroy'd might there destroy;
To meet thee in the glittering throng,
  Would wake Presumption's hope of joy.

Then to the things whose bliss or woe,
  Like mine, is wild and worthless all,
That world resign—such scenes forego,
  Where those who feel must surely fall.

Thy youth, thy charms, thy tenderness,
  Thy soul from long seclusion pure;
From what even here hath pass'd, may guess
  What there thy bosom must endure.

Oh! pardon that imploring tear,
  Since not by Virtue shed in vain,
My frenzy drew from eyes so dear;
  For me they shall not weep again.

Though long and mournful must it be,
  The thought that we no more may meet;
Yet I deserve the stern decree,
  And almost deem the sentence sweet.

Still, had I loved thee less, my heart
  Had then less sacrificed to thine;
It felt not half so much to part,
  As if its guilt had made thee mine.

1813. [First published, 1814.]

IMPROMPTU, IN REPLY TO A FRIEND

[For the origin of these lines see Byron's Letter to Moore, September 27, 1813.]

When, from the heart where Sorrow sits,
  Her dusky shadow mounts too high,
And o'er the changing aspect flits,
  And clouds the brow, or fills the eye;

Heed not that gloom which soon shall sink:
My thoughts their dungeon know too well;
Back to my breast the wanderers shrink,
And droop within their silent cell.

[First published, 1814.]

SONNET, TO GENEVRA

['Redde some Italian, and wrote two Sonnets. . . . I never wrote but one sonnet before, and that was not in earnest, and many years ago, as an exercise — and I will never write another. They are the most puling, petrifying, stupidly Platonic compositions.' — BYRON, *Diary*, December 18, 1813.]

THINE eyes' blue tenderness, thy long fair hair,
And the wan lustre of thy features — caught
From contemplation — where serenely wrought,
Seems Sorrow's softness charm'd from its despair —
Have thrown such speaking sadness in thine air,
That — but I know thy blessed bosom fraught
With mines of unalloy'd and stainless thought —
I should have deem'd thee doom'd to earthly care.
With such an aspect, by his colours blent,
When from his beauty-breathing pencil born
(Except that *thou* hast nothing to repent),
The Magdalen of Guido saw the morn —
Such seem'st thou — but how much more excellent!
With nought Remorse can claim — nor Virtue scorn.

December 17, 1813. [First published, 1814.]

SONNET, TO THE SAME

THY cheek is pale with thought, but not from woe,
And yet so lovely, that if Mirth could flush
Its rose of whiteness with the brightest blush,
My heart would wish away that ruder glow:
And dazzle not thy deep-blue eyes — but, oh!
While gazing on them sterner eyes will gush,
And into mine my mother's weakness rush,
Soft as the last drops round heaven's airy bow.
For, through thy long dark lashes low depending,
The soul of melancholy Gentleness
Gleams like a seraph from the sky descending,
Above all pain, yet pitying all distress;
At once such majesty with sweetness blending,
I worship more, but cannot love thee less.

December 17, 1813. [First published, 1814.]

FROM THE PORTUGUESE

'TU MI CHAMAS'

IN moments to delight devoted,
'My life!' with tenderest tone, you cry;
Dear words! on which my heart had doted,
If youth could neither fade nor die.

To death even hours like these must roll,
Ah! then repeat those accents never;
Or change 'my life!' into 'my soul!'
Which, like my love, exists for ever.

[First published, 1814.]

ANOTHER VERSION

YOU call me still your *life*. — Oh! change the word —
Life is as transient as the inconstant sigh:
Say rather I'm your soul; more just that name,
For, like the soul, my love can never die

[First published, 1832.]

THE DEVIL'S DRIVE

AN UNFINISHED RHAPSODY

[An imitation of *The Devil's Walk*, which Byron ascribes to Porson, but which was really the joint production of Coleridge and Southey. This poem, hitherto printed with many *lacunæ*, was first given entire in the Edition of 1904 from a manuscript in the possession of the Earl of Ilchester.]

The Devil return'd to hell by two,
And he stay'd at home till five;
When he dined on some homicides done in *ragoût*,
And a rebel or so in an *Irish* stew,
And sausages made of a self-slain Jew —
And bethought himself what next to do,
'And,' quoth he, 'I 'll take a drive:
I walk'd in the morning, I 'll ride to-night;
In darkness my children take most delight,
And I 'll see how my favourites thrive.

'And what shall I ride in?' quoth Lucifer then —
'If I follow'd my taste, indeed,
I should mount in a waggon of wounded men,
And smile to see them bleed.
But these will be furnish'd again and again,
And at present my purpose is speed;
To see my manor as much as I may,
And watch that no souls shall be poach'd away.

'I have a state-coach at Carlton House,
A chariot in Seymour Place;
But they 're lent to two friends, who make me amends
By driving my favourite pace;
And they handle their reins with such a grace,
I have something for both at the end of their race.

'So now for the earth to take my chance.'
Then up to the earth sprung he;
And making a jump from Moscow to France,
He stepp'd across the sea,
And rested his hoof on a turnpike road,
No very great way from a bishop's abode.

But first as he flew, I forgot to say,
That he hover'd a moment upon his way
To look upon Leipsic plain;
And so sweet to his eye was its sulphury glare,
And so soft to his ear was the cry of despair,
That he perch'd on a mountain of slain;
And he gazed with delight from its growing height,
Nor often on earth had he seen such a sight,
Nor his work done half as well:
For the field ran so red with the blood of the dead,
That it blush'd like the waves of hell!
Then loudly, and wildly, and long laugh'd he:
'Methinks they have here little need of *me!*'

Long he look'd down on the hosts of each clime,
While the warriors hand to hand were —
Gaul, Austrian and Muscovite heroes sublime,
And (Muse of Fitzgerald arise with a rhyme!)
A quantity of *Landwehr!*
Gladness was there,
For men of all might and the monarchs of earth,
There met for the wolf and the worm to make mirth,
And a feast for the fowls of the Air!

But he turn'd aside and look'd from the ridge
Of hills along the river,
And the best thing he saw was a broken bridge,
Which a Corporal chose to shiver;
Though an Emperor's taste was displeased with his haste,
The Devil he thought it clever;
And he laugh'd again in a lighter strain,
O'er the torrent swoln and rainy,
When he saw 'on a fiery steed' Prince Pon,
In taking care of Number *One*
Get drown'd with a great *many!*

But the softest note that soothed his ear
Was the sound of a widow sighing;
And the sweetest sight was the icy tear,
Which horror froze in the blue eye clear
Of a maid by her lover lying —
As round her fell her long fair hair;
And she look'd to heaven with that frenzied air
Which seem'd to ask if a God were there!
And, stretch'd by the wall of a ruin'd hut,
With its hollow cheek, and eyes half shut,
A child of Famine dying:
And the carnage *begun*, when *resistance* is done,
And the fall of the vainly flying!

Then he gazed on a town by besiegers taken,
Nor cared he who were winning;

But he saw an old maid, for years forsaken,
Get up and leave her spinning;
And she look'd in her glass, and to one that did pass,
She said — 'pray are the rapes beginning?'

But the Devil has reach'd our cliffs so white,
And what did he there, I pray?
If his eyes were good, he but saw by night
What we see every day:
But he made a tour, and kept a journal
Of all the wondrous sights nocturnal,
And he sold it in shares to the *Men* of the *Row*,
Who bid pretty well — but they *cheated* him, though!

The Devil first saw, as he thought, the *Mail*,
Its coachman and his coat;
So instead of a pistol he cock'd his tail,
And seized him by the throat:
'Aha!' quoth he, 'what have we here?
'T is a new barouche, and an ancient peer!'

So he sat him on his box again,
And bade him have no fear,
But be true to his club and staunch to his rein,
His brothel, and his beer;
'Next to seeing a lord at the council board,
I would rather see him here.'

Satan hired a horse and gig
With promises to pay;
And he pawn'd his horns for a spruce new wig,
To redeem as he came away:
And he whistled some tune, a waltz or a jig,
And drove off at the close of day.

The first place he stopp'd at — he heard the Psalm
That rung from a Methodist Chapel:
''T is the best sound I've heard,' quoth he, 'since my palm
Presented Eve her apple!
When *Faith* is all, 't is an excellent sign,
That the *Works* and Workmen both are mine!'

He pass'd Tommy Tyrwhitt, that standing jest,
To princely wit a Martyr:
But the last joke of all was by far the best,
When he sail'd away with 'the Garter'!
'And' — quoth Satan — 'this Embassy's worthy my sight,
Should I see nothing else to amuse me to-night.
With no one to bear it, but Thomas à Tyrwhitt,
This ribband belongs to an "order of Merit"!'

He stopp'd at an Inn and stepp'd within
The Bar and read the 'Times;'
And never such a treat, as — the epistle of one 'Vetus,'
Had he found save in downright crime:
'Though I doubt if this drivelling encomiast of War
Ever saw a field fought, or felt a scar,
Yet his fame shall go farther than he can guess,
For I'll keep him a place in my *hottest Press*;
And his works shall be bound in Morocco *d'Enfer*,
And letter'd behind with his *Nom de Guerre*.'

The Devil gat next to Westminster,
And he turn'd to 'the room' of the Commons;
But he heard, as he purposed to enter in there,
That 'the Lords' had received a summons;
And he thought, as a '*quondam* aristocrat,'
He might peep at the peers, though to *hear* them were flat;
And he walk'd up the house so like one of our own,
That they say that he stood pretty near the throne.

He saw the Lord Liverpool seemingly wise,
The Lord Westmoreland certainly silly,
And Jockey of Norfolk — a man of some size —
And Chatham, so like his friend Billy;
And he saw the tears in Lord Eldon's eyes,
Because the Catholics would *not* rise,
In spite of his prayers and his prophecies;

And he heard — which set Satan himself a staring —
A certain Chief Justice say something like *swearing* ;
And the Devil was shock'd — and quoth he, 'I must go,
For I find we have much better manners below:
If thus he harangues when he passes my border,
I shall hint to friend Moloch to call him to order.'

Then the Devil went down to the humbler House,
Where he readily found his way
As natural to him as its hole to a Mouse,
He had been there many a day;
And many a vote and soul and job he
Had bid for and carried away from the Lobby:
But there now was a 'call' and accomplish'd debaters
Appear'd in the glory of hats, boots and gaiters —
Some paid rather more — but *all* worse dress'd than Waiters!

There was Canning for War, and Whitbread for peace,
And others as suited their fancies;
But all were agreed that our debts should increase
Excepting the Demagogue Francis.
That rogue! how could Westminster chuse him again
To leaven the virtue of these honest men!
But the Devil remain'd till the Break of Day
Blush'd upon Sleep and Lord Castlereagh:
Then up half the house got, and Satan got up
With the drowsy to snore — or the hungry to sup: —
But so torpid the power of some speakers, 't is said,
That they sent even him to his brimstone bed.

He had seen George Rose — but George was grown dumb,
And only lied in thought!
And the Devil has all the pleasure to come
Of hearing him talk as he ought.
With the falsest of tongues, the sincerest of men —
His veracity were but deceit —
And Nature must first have unmade him again,
Ere his breast or his face, or his tongue, or his pen,
Conceived — utter'd — look'd — or wrote down letters ten,
Which Truth would acknowledge complete.

Satan next took the army list in hand,
Where he found a new 'Field Marshal;'
And when he saw this high command
Conferr'd on his Highness of Cumberland,
'Oh! were I prone to cavil — or were I not the Devil,
I should say this was somewhat partial;
Since the only wounds that this Warrior gat,
Were from God knows whom — and the Devil knows what!'

He then popp'd his head in a royal Ball,
And saw all the Haram so hoary;
And who there besides but Corinna de Staël!
Turn'd Methodist and Tory!
'Aye — Aye' — quoth he — ''t is the way with them all,
When Wits grow tired of Glory:
But thanks to the weakness, that thus could pervert her,
Since the dearest of prizes to me 's a deserter:
Mem — whenever a sudden conversion I want,
To send to the school of Philosopher Kant;
And whenever I need a critic who can gloss over
All faults — to send for Mackintosh to write up the Philosopher.'

The Devil wax'd faint at the sight of this Saint,
And he thought himself of eating;
And began to cram from a plate of ham
Wherewith a Page was retreating —
Having nothing else to do (for 'the friends' each so near
Had sold all their souls long before),
As he swallow'd down the bacon he wish'd himself a Jew
For the sake of another crime more:

For Sinning itself is but half a recreation,
Unless it ensures most infallible Damnation.

But he turn'd him about, for he heard a sound
Which even his ear found faults in;
For whirling above — underneath — and around —
Were his fairest Disciples Waltzing!
And quoth he — 'though this be — the *premier pas* to me,
Against it I would warn all —
Should I introduce these revels among my younger devils,
They would all turn perfectly carnal:
And though fond of the flesh — yet I never could bear it
Should quite in my kingdom get the upper hand of Spirit.'

The Devil (but 't was over) had been vastly glad
To see the new Drury Lane,
And yet he might have been rather mad
To see it rebuilt in vain;
And had he beheld their 'Nourjahad,'
Would never have gone again:
And Satan had taken it much amiss,
They should fasten such a piece on a friend of his —
Though he knew that his works were somewhat sad,
He never had found them *quite* so bad:
For this was 'the book' which, of yore,
Job, sorely smitten,
Said, 'Oh that *mine* enemy, *mine* enemy had written!'

Then he found sixty scribblers in separate cells,
And marvell'd what they were doing,
For they look'd like little fiends in their own little hells,
Damnation for others brewing —
Though their paper seem'd to shrink, from the heat of their ink,
They were only *coolly* reviewing!
And as one of them wrote down the pronoun '*We*,'
'That Plural' — says Satan — 'means *him* and *me*,
With the Editor added to make up the three
Of an Athanasian Trinity,
And render the believers in our "Articles" sensible,
How many must combine to form *one* Incomprehensible!'

[LOVE AND GOLD]

[First published in the Edition of 1900 from a manuscript in the possession of Mr. Murray.]

I CANNOT talk of Love to thee,
Though thou art young and free and fair!
There is a spell thou dost not see,
That bids a genuine love despair.

And yet that spell invites each youth,
For thee to sigh, or seem to sigh;
Makes falsehood wear the garb of truth,
And Truth itself appear a lie.

If ever Doubt a place possest
In woman's heart, 't were wise in thine:
Admit not Love into thy breast,
Doubt others' love, nor trust in mine.

Perchance 't is feign'd, perchance sincere,
But false or true thou canst not tell;
So much hast thou from all to fear,
In that unconquerable spell.

Of all the herd that throng around,
Thy simpering or thy sighing train,
Come tell me who to thee is bound
By Love's or Plutus' heavier chain.

In some 't is Nature, some 't is Art
That bids them worship at thy shrine;
But thou deserv'st a better heart,
Than they or I can give for thine.

For thee, and such as thee, behold,
Is Fortune painted truly — blind!
Who doom'd thee to be bought or sold,
Has proved too bounteous to be kind.

Each day some tempter's crafty suit
Would woo thee to a loveless bed:
I see thee to the altar's foot
A decorated victim led.

Adieu, dear maid! I must not speak
Whate'er my secret thoughts may be;
Though thou art all that man can reck
I dare not talk of Love to *thee*.

ODE TO NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE

Expende Annibalem: — quot libras in duce summo
Invenies? JUVENAL, *Sat.* x.

'The Emperor Nepos was acknowledged by the Senate, by the Italians, and by the Provincials of Gaul; his moral virtues, and military talents, were loudly celebrated; and those who derived any private benefit from his government announced in prophetic strains the restoration of public felicity. . . . By this shameful abdication, he protracted his life a few years, in a very ambiguous state, between an Emperor and an Exile, till ——' — GIBBON'S *Decline and Fall*, vol. vi. p. 220

[Byron, when publishing *The Corsair*, in January, 1814, announced an apparently quite serious resolution to withdraw, for some years at least, from poetry. His letters, of the February and March following, abound in repetitions of the same determination. On the morning of the ninth of April, he writes: 'No more rhyme for — or rather *from* — me. I have taken my leave of that stage, and henceforth will mountebank it no longer.' In the evening, a *Gazette Extraordinary* announced the abdication of Fontainebleau, and the poet violated his vows next morning, by composing this Ode, which he immediately published, though without his name. His diary says: 'April 10. To-day I have boxed one hour — written an Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte — copied it — eaten six biscuits — drunk four bottles of soda water, and redde away the rest of my time.']

'T IS done — but yesterday a King!
And arm'd with Kings to strive —
And now thou art a nameless thing:
So abject — yet alive!
Is this the man of thousand thrones,
Who strew'd our earth with hostile bones,
And can he thus survive?
Since he, miscall'd the Morning Star,
Nor man nor fiend hath fallen so far.

Ill-minded man! why scourge thy kind
Who bow'd so low the knee?
By gazing on thyself grown blind,
Thou taught'st the rest to see.
With might unquestion'd, — power to save, —
Thine only gift hath been the grave,
To those that worshipp'd thee;
Nor till thy fall could mortals guess
Ambition 's less than littleness!

Thanks for that lesson — it will teach
To after-warriors more
Than high Philosophy can preach,
And vainly preach'd before.
That spell upon the minds of men
Breaks never to unite again,
That led them to adore
Those Pagod things of sabre sway,
With fronts of brass and feet of clay.

The triumph, and the vanity,
The rapture of the strife —
The earthquake voice of Victory,
To thee the breath of life;
The sword, the sceptre, and that sway
Which man seem'd made but to obey,
Wherewith renown was rife —
All quell'd — Dark Spirit! what must be
The madness of thy memory!

The Desolator desolate!
The Victor overthrown!
The Arbiter of others' fate
A Suppliant for his own!
Is it some yet imperial hope
That with such change can calmly cope?
Or dread of death alone?
To die a prince — or live a slave —
Thy choice is most ignobly brave!

He who of old would rend the oak,
Dream'd not of the rebound;
Chain'd by the trunk he vainly broke —
Alone — how look'd he round?
Thou, in the sternness of thy strength,
An equal deed hast done at length,
And darker fate hast found:
He fell, the forest prowlers' prey;
But thou must eat thy heart away!

The Roman, when his burning heart
Was slaked with blood of Rome,
Threw down the dagger — dared depart,
In savage grandeur, home.
He dared depart in utter scorn
Of men that such a yoke had borne,
Yet left him such a doom!
His only glory was that hour
Of self-upheld abandon'd power.

The Spaniard, when the lust of sway
Had lost its quickening spell,
Cast crowns for rosaries away,
An empire for a cell;

A strict accountant of his beads,
A subtle disputant on creeds,
His dotage trifled well:
Yet better had he neither known
A bigot's shrine, nor despot's throne.

But thou — from thy reluctant hand
The thunderbolt is wrung —
Too late thou leav'st the high command
To which thy weakness clung;
All Evil Spirit as thou art,
It is enough to grieve the heart
To see thine own unstrung;
To think that God's fair world hath been
The footstool of a thing so mean;

And Earth hath spilt her blood for him,
Who thus can hoard his own!
And Monarchs bow'd the trembling limb,
And thank'd him for a throne!
Fair Freedom! we may hold thee dear,
When thus thy mightiest foes their fear
In humblest guise have shown.
Oh, ne'er may tyrant leave behind
A brighter name to lure mankind!

Thine evil deeds are writ in gore,
Nor written thus in vain —
Thy triumphs tell of fame no more,
Or deepen every stain:
If thou hadst died as honour dies,
Some new Napoleon might arise,
To shame the world again —
But who would soar the solar height,
To set in such a starless night?

Weigh'd in the balance, hero dust
Is vile as vulgar clay;
Thy scales, Mortality! are just
To all that pass away:
But yet methought the living great
Some higher sparks should animate,
To dazzle and dismay:
Nor deem'd Contempt could thus make mirth
Of these, the Conquerors of the earth.

And she, proud Austria's mournful flower,
Thy still imperial bride;
How bears her breast the torturing hour?
Still clings she to thy side?
Must she too bend, must she too share
Thy late repentance, long despair,
Thou throneless Homicide?
If still she loves thee, hoard that gem;
'T is worth thy vanish'd diadem!

Then haste thee to thy sullen Isle,
And gaze upon the sea;
That element may meet thy smile —
It ne'er was ruled by thee!
Or trace with thine all idle hand,
In loitering mood upon the sand,
That Earth is now as free!
That Corinth's pedagogue hath now
Transferr'd his by-word to thy brow.

Thou Timour! in his captive's cage,
What thoughts will there be thine,
While brooding in thy prison'd rage?
But one — 'The world *was* mine!'
Unless, like he of Babylon,
All sense is with thy sceptre gone,
Life will not long confine
That spirit pour'd so widely forth —
So long obey'd — so little worth!

Or, like the thief of fire from heaven,
Wilt thou withstand the shock?
And share with him, the unforgiven,
His vulture and his rock!
Foredoom'd by God — by man accurst,
And that last act, though not thy worst,
The very Fiend's arch mock;
He in his fall preserved his pride,
And, if a mortal, had as proudly died!

There was a day — there was an hour,
While earth was Gaul's — Gaul thine —
When that immeasurable power
Unsated to resign,
Had been an act of purer fame
Than gathers round Marengo's name,
And gilded thy decline
Through the long twilight of all time,
Despite some passing clouds of crime.

But thou forsooth must be a king,
And don the purple vest, —
As if that foolish robe could wring
Remembrance from thy breast.
Where is that faded garment? where
The gewgaws thou wert fond to wear,
The star — the string — the crest?
Vain froward child of empire! say,
Are all thy playthings snatch'd away?

Where may the wearied eye repose,
When gazing on the Great;
Where neither guilty glory glows,
Nor despicable state?

Yes — one — the first — the last — the best —
The Cincinnatus of the West,
 Whom envy dared not hate,
Bequeath'd the name of Washington,
To make man blush there was but one!
 April 10, 1814.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

[For the origin of these stanzas see *Letters*, May 4, 1814.]

I speak not, I trace not, I breathe not thy name,
There is grief in the sound, there is guilt in the fame:
But the tear which now burns on my cheek may impart
The deep thoughts that dwell in that silence of heart.

Too brief for our passion, too long for our peace
Were those hours — can their joy or their bitterness cease?
We repent, we abjure, we will break from our chain, —
We will part, — we will fly to — unite it again!

Oh! thine be the gladness, and mine be the guilt!
Forgive me, adored one! — forsake, if thou wilt;
But the heart which is thine shall expire undebased,
And *man* shall not break it — whatever *thou* mayst.

And stern to the haughty, but humble to thee,
This soul, in its bitterest blackness, shall be;
And our days seem as swift, and our moments more sweet,
With thee by my side, than with worlds at our feet.

One sigh of thy sorrow, one look of thy love,
Shall turn me or fix, shall reward or reprove;
And the heartless may wonder at all I resign —
Thy lip shall reply, not to them, but to *mine*.
 May 4, 1814. [First published, 1830.]

ADDRESS INTENDED TO BE RECITED AT THE CALEDONIAN MEETING

[The 'Caledonian Meeting' was the annual gathering of subscribers to the Highland Society which undertook to support the Caledonian Asylum for the education and support of children of Scottish sailors and soldiers.]

Who hath not glow'd above the page where fame
Hath fix'd high Caledon's unconquer'd name;
The mountain-land which spurn'd the Roman chain,
And baffled back the fiery-crested Dane,
Whose bright claymore and hardihood of hand
No foe could tame — no tyrant could command?
That race is gone — but still their children breathe,
And glory crowns them with redoubled wreath:
O'er Gael and Saxon mingling banners shine,
And, England! add their stubborn strength to thine.
The blood which flow'd with Wallace flows as free,
But now 't is only shed for fame and thee!
Oh! pass not by the northern veteran's claim,
But give support — the world hath given him fame!

 The humbler ranks, the lowly brave, who bled
While cheerly following where the mighty led,
Who sleep beneath the undistinguish'd sod
Where happier comrades in their triumph trod,
To us bequeath — 't is all their fate allows —
The sireless offspring and the lonely spouse.
She on high Albyn's dusky hills may raise
The tearful eye in melancholy gaze,
Or view, while shadowy auguries disclose
The Highland seer's anticipated woes,
The bleeding phantom of each martial form
Dim in the cloud, or darkling in the storm;
While sad, she chants the solitary song,
The soft lament for him who tarries long —
For him, whose distant relics vainly crave
The Coronach's wild requiem to the brave!

'Tis Heaven — not man — must charm away the woe
Which bursts when Nature's feelings newly flow;
Yet tenderness and time may rob the tear
Of half its bitterness for one so dear;
A nation's gratitude perchance may spread
A thornless pillow for the widow'd head;
May lighten well her heart's maternal care,
And wean from penury the soldier's heir.

May, 1814. [First published, 1830.]

CONDOLATORY ADDRESS

TO SARAH COUNTESS OF JERSEY, ON THE PRINCE REGENT'S RETURNING HER PICTURE TO MRS. MEE

[Mrs. Mee, a fashionable miniature painter of the day, was much employed by the Prince in making portraits for him.]

When the vain triumph of the imperial lord,
Whom servile Rome obey'd, and yet abhorr'd,
Gave to the vulgar gaze each glorious bust
That left a likeness of the brave or just;
What most admired each scrutinizing eye
Of all that deck'd that passing pageantry?
What spread from face to face that wondering air?
The thought of Brutus — for his was not there!
That absence proved his worth, — that absence fix'd
His memory on the longing mind, unmix'd;
And more decreed his glory to endure,
Than all a gold Colossus could secure.
If thus, fair Jersey, our desiring gaze
Search for thy form, in vain and mute amaze,
Amidst those pictured charms, whose loveliness,
Bright though they be, thine own had render'd less;
If he, that vain old man, whom truth admits
Heir of his father's crown and of his wits,
If his corrupted eye and wither'd heart
Could with thy gentle image bear depart;
That tasteless shame be *his*, and ours the grief,
To gaze on Beauty's band without its chief:
Yet comfort still one selfish thought imparts,
We lose the portrait, but preserve our hearts.
What can his vaulted gallery now disclose?
A garden with all flowers — except the rose; —
A fount that only wants its living stream;
A night, with every star, save Dian's beam.
Lost to our eyes the present forms shall be,
That turn from tracing them to dream of thee;
And more on that recall'd resemblance pause,
Than all he *shall* not force on our applause.
Long may thy yet meridian lustre shine,
With all that Virtue asks of Homage thine:
The symmetry of youth, the grace of mien,
The eye that gladdens, and the brow serene;
The glossy darkness of that clustering hair,
Which shades, yet shows that forehead more than fair!
Each glance that wins us, and the life that throws
A spell which will not let our looks repose,
But turn to gaze again, and find anew
Some charm that well rewards another view.
These are not lessen'd, these are still as bright,
Albeit too dazzling for a dotard's sight;
And those must wait till ev'ry charm is gone,
To please the paltry heart that pleases none: —
That dull, cold sensualist, whose sickly eye
In envious dimness pass'd thy portrait by;
Who rack'd his little spirit to combine
Its hate of *Freedom's* loveliness, and *thine*.

May 29, 1814.

ELEGIAC STANZAS ON THE DEATH OF SIR PETER PARKER, BART.

There is a tear for all that die,
A mourner o'er the humblest grave;
But nations swell the funeral cry,
And Triumph weeps above the brave.

For them is Sorrow's purest sigh
O'er Ocean's heaving bosom sent:
In vain their bones unburied lie,
All earth becomes their monument!

A tomb is theirs on every page,
An epitaph on every tongue:
The present hours, the future age,
For them bewail, to them belong.

For them the voice of festal mirth
Grows hush'd, *their name* the only sound;
While deep Remembrance pours to Worth
The goblet's tributary round.

A theme to crowds that knew them not,
Lamented by admiring foes,
Who would not share their glorious lot?
Who would not die the death they chose?

And, gallant Parker! thus enshrined
Thy life, thy fall, thy fame shall be;
And early valour, glowing, find
A model in thy memory.

But there are breasts that bleed with thee
In woe, that glory cannot quell;
And shuddering hear of victory,
Where one so dear, so dauntless, fell.

Where shall they turn to mourn thee less?
When cease to hear thy cherish'd name?
Time cannot teach forgetfulness,
While Grief's full heart is fed by Fame.

Alas! for them, though not for thee,
They cannot choose but weep the more;
Deep for the dead the grief must be,
Who ne'er gave cause to mourn before.

October 7, 1814.

JULIAN [A FRAGMENT]

[First published in the Edition of 1900 from a manuscript in the possession of Mr. Murray.]

The Night came on the Waters — all was rest
On Earth — but Rage on Ocean's troubled Heart.
The Waves arose and roll'd beneath the blast;
The Sailors gazed upon their shiver'd Mast.
In that dark Hour a long loud gather'd cry
From out the billows pierced the sable sky,
And borne o'er breakers reach'd the craggy shore —
The Sea roars on — that Cry is heard no more.

There is no vestige, in the Dawning light,
Of those that shriek'd thro' shadows of the Night.
The Bark — the Crew — the very Wreck is gone,
Marr'd — mutilated — traceless — all save one.
In him there still is Life, the Wave that dash'd
On shore the plank to which his form was lash'd,
Return'd unheeding of its helpless Prey —
The lone survivor of that Yesterday —
The one of Many whom the withering Gale
Hath left unpunish'd to record their Tale.
But who shall hear it? on that barren Sand
None comes to stretch the hospitable hand.
That shore reveals no print of human foot,
Nor e'en the pawing of the wilder Brute;
And niggard vegetation will not smile,
All sunless on that solitary Isle.

The naked Stranger rose, and wrung his hair,
And that first moment pass'd in silent prayer.
Alas! the sound — he sunk into Despair —
He was on Earth — but what was Earth to him,
Houseless and homeless — bare both breast and limb?
Cut off from all but Memory he curst
His fate — his folly — but himself the worst.
What was his hope? he look'd upon the Wave —
Despite — of all — it still may be his Grave!

He rose and with a feeble effort shaped
His course unto the billows — late escaped:
But weakness conquer'd — swam his dizzy glance,
And down to Earth he sunk in silent trance.
How long his senses bore its chilling chain,
He knew not — but, recall'd to Life again,
A stranger stood beside his shivering form —
And what was he? had he too scaped the storm?

He raised young Julian. 'Is thy Cup so full
Of bitterness — thy Hope — thy heart so dull

That thou shouldst from Thee dash the Draught of Life,
So late escaped the elemental strife!
Rise — tho' these shores few aids to Life supply,
Look upon me, and know thou shalt not die.
Thou gazest in mute wonder — more may be
Thy marvel when thou knowest mine and me.
But come — The bark that bears us hence shall find
Her Haven, soon, despite the warning Wind.'

He raised young Julian from the sand, and such
Strange power of healing dwelt within the touch,
That his weak limbs grew light with freshen'd Power,
As he had slept not fainted in that hour,
And woke from Slumber — as the Birds awake,
Recall'd at morning from the branchèd brake,
When the day's promise heralds early Spring,
And Heaven unfolded woos their soaring wing:
So Julian felt, and gazed upon his Guide,
With honest Wonder what might next betide.

December 12, 1814.

TO BELSHAZZAR

Belshazzar! from the banquet turn,
Nor in thy sensual fulness fall;
Behold! while yet before thee burn
The graven words, the glowing wall.
Many a despot men miscall
Crown'd and anointed from on high;
But thou, the weakest, worst of all —
Is it not written, thou must die?

Go! dash the roses from thy brow —
Grey hairs but poorly wreathe with them;
Youth's garlands misbecome thee now,
More than thy very diadem,
Where thou hast tarnish'd every gem: —
Then throw the worthless bauble by,
Which, worn by thee, ev'n slaves contemn;
And learn like better men to die!

Oh! early in the balance weigh'd,
And ever light of word and worth,
Whose soul expired ere youth decay'd,
And left thee but a mass of earth.
To see thee moves the scorner's mirth:
But tears in Hope's averted eye
Lament that even thou hadst birth —
Unfit to govern, live, or die.

February 12, 1815. [First published, 1831.]

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

> O lachrymarum fons, tenero sacros
> Ducentium ortus ex animo; quater
> Felix! in imo qui scatentem
> Pectore te, pia Nympha, sensit.
> Gray's *Poemata.*

[These verses were given by Byron to Mr. Power of the Strand, who published them with music by Sir John Stevenson. In a letter (March 8, 1815) he states that 'the death of poor Dorset' set him into the mood for writing them. In another letter (March, 1816) he calls them 'the *truest*, though the most melancholy,' he ever wrote.]

There 's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away,
When the glow of early thought declines in feeling's dull decay;
'T is not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone, which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere youth itself be past.

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt, or ocean of excess:
The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain
The shore to which their shiver'd sail shall never stretch again.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like death itself comes down;
It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not dream its own;
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 't is where the ice appears.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth distract the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more their former hope of rest;

'T is but as ivy-leaves around the ruin'd turret wreath,
All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and grey beneath.

Oh could I feel as I have felt, — or be what I have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept, o'er many a vanish'd scene;
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish though they be,
So, midst the wither'd waste of life, those tears would flow to me.

March, 1815. [First published, 1816.]

STANZAS

[These stanzas, slightly different in form and superscribed 'On the Death of the Duke of Dorset,' are in the new Murray edition claimed as first published from an autograph manuscript in the possession of Mr. Murray. They have been in print for at least more than half a century.]

I HEARD thy fate without a tear,
Thy loss with scarce a sigh;
And yet thou wert surpassing dear —
Too loved of all to die.

I know not what hath sear'd mine eye:
The tears refuse to start;
But every drop its lids deny
Falls dreary on my heart.

Yes — deep and heavy, one by one,
They sink, and turn to care;
As cavern'd waters wear the stone,
Yet, dropping, harden there.

They cannot petrify more fast
Than feelings sunk remain,
Which, coldly fix'd, regard the past,
But never melt again.

NAPOLEON'S FAREWELL

FROM THE FRENCH

[This and the following poems are, it is needless to say, *not* from the French, but original with Byron.]

FAREWELL to the Land where the gloom of my Glory
Arose and o'ershadow'd the earth with her name —
She abandons me now — but the page of her story,
The brightest or blackest, is fill'd with my fame.
I have warr'd with a world which vanquish'd me only
When the meteor of conquest allured me too far;
I have coped with the nations which dread me thus lonely,
The last single Captive to millions in war.

Farewell to thee, France! when thy diadem crown'd me,
I made thee the gem and the wonder of earth, —
But thy weakness decrees I should leave as I found thee,
Decay'd in thy glory, and sunk in thy worth.
Oh! for the veteran hearts that were wasted
In strife with the storm, when their battles were won —
Then the Eagle, whose gaze in that moment was blasted,
Had still soar'd with eyes fix'd on victory's sun!

Farewell to thee, France! — but when Liberty rallies
Once more in thy regions, remember me then, —
The violet still grows in the depth of thy valleys;
Though wither'd, thy tear will unfold it again.
Yet, yet, I may baffle the hosts that surround us,
And yet may thy heart leap awake to my voice;
There are links which must break in the chain that has bound us,
Then turn thee and call on the Chief of thy choice.

July 25, 1815.

FROM THE FRENCH

MUST thou go, my glorious Chief,
Sever'd from thy faithful few?
Who can tell thy warrior's grief,
Maddening o'er that long adieu?

Woman's love, and friendship's zeal,
Dear as both have been to me —
What are they to all I feel,
With a soldier's faith for thee?

Idol of the soldier's soul!
First in fight, but mightiest now:
Many could a world control;
Thee alone no doom can bow.
By thy side for years I dared
Death; and envied those who fell,
When their dying shout was heard,
Blessing him they served so well.

Would that I were cold with those,
Since this hour I live to see;
When the doubts of coward foes
Scarce dare trust a man with thee,
Dreading each should set thee free!
Oh! although in dungeons pent,
All their chains were light to me,
Gazing on thy soul unbent.

Would the sycophants of him
Now so deaf to duty's prayer,
Were his borrow'd glories dim,
In his native darkness share?
Were that world this hour his own,
All thou calmly dost resign,
Could he purchase with that throne
Hearts like those which still are thine?

My chief, my king, my friend, adieu!
Never did I droop before;
Never to my sovereign sue,
As his foes I now implore:
All I ask is to divide
Every peril he must brave,
Sharing by the hero's side
His fall, his exile, and his grave.
[First published, 1816.]

ODE FROM THE FRENCH

We do not curse thee, Waterloo!
Though Freedom's blood thy plain bedew;
There 't was shed, but is not sunk —
Rising from each gory trunk,
Like the water-spout from ocean,
With a strong and growing motion —
It soars, and mingles in the air,
With that of lost Labedoyère,
With that of him whose honour'd grave
Contains the 'bravest of the brave.'
A crimson cloud it spreads and glows,
But shall return to whence it rose;
When 't is full 't will burst asunder —
Never yet was heard such thunder
As then shall shake the world with wonder,
Never yet was seen such lightning
As o'er heaven shall then be bright'ning!
Like the Wormwood Star foretold
By the sainted Seer of old,
Show'ring down a fiery flood,
Turning rivers into blood.

The Chief has fallen, but not by you,
Vanquishers of Waterloo!
When the soldier citizen
Sway'd not o'er his fellow-men,
Save in deeds that led them on
Where Glory smiled on Freedom's son —
Who, of all the despots banded,
With that youthful chief competed?
Who could boast o'er France defeated,
Till lone Tyranny commanded?
Till, goaded by ambition's sting,
The Hero sunk into the King?
Then he fell: — so perish all
Who would men by man enthrall!

And thou, too, of the snow-white plume!
Whose realm refused thee ev'n a tomb;
Better hadst thou still been leading
France o'er hosts of hirelings bleeding,
Than sold thyself to death and shame
For a meanly royal name;
Such as he of Naples wears,
Who thy blood-bought title bears.
Little didst thou deem, when dashing
On thy war-horse through the ranks
Like a stream which burst its banks,
While helmets cleft, and sabres clashing,
Shone and shiver'd fast around thee —
Of the fate at last which found thee:
Was that haughty plume laid low
By a slave's dishonest blow?
Once — as the Moon sways o'er the tide,
It roll'd in air, the warrior's guide;
Through the smoke-created night
Of the black and sulphurous fight,
The soldier raised his seeking eye
To catch that crest's ascendency, —
And, as it onward rolling rose,
So moved his heart upon our foes.
There, where death's brief pang was quickest,
And the battle's wreck lay thickest,
Strew'd beneath the advancing banner
Of the eagle's burning crest

(There with thunder-clouds to fan her
Who could then her wing arrest —
Victory beaming from her breast?) —
While the broken line enlarging
Fell, or fled along the plain;
There be sure was Murat charging!
There he ne'er shall charge again!

O'er glories gone the invaders march,
Weeps Triumph o'er each levell'd arch —
But let Freedom rejoice,
With her heart in her voice;
But, her hand on her sword,
Doubly shall she be adored;
France hath twice too well been taught
The 'moral lesson' dearly bought —
Her safety sits not on a throne,
With Capet or Napoleon!
But in equal rights and laws,
Hearts and hands in one great cause —
Freedom, such as God hath given
Unto all beneath his heaven,
With their breath, and from their birth,
Though Guilt would sweep it from the earth;
With a fierce and lavish hand
Scattering nations' wealth like sand;
Pouring nations' blood like water,
In imperial seas of slaughter!

But the heart and the mind,
And the voice of mankind,
Shall arise in communion —
And who shall resist that proud union?
The time is past when swords subdued —
Man may die — the soul 's renew'd:
Even in this low world of care
Freedom ne'er should want an heir;
Millions breathe but to inherit
Her forever bounding spirit:
When once more her hosts assemble,
Tyrants shall believe and tremble —
Smile they at this idle threat?
Crimson tears will follow yet.

[First published, 1816.]

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

There be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmèd ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lull'd winds seem dreaming.

And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep;
Whose breast is gently heaving,
As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

March 28 [1816].

ON THE STAR OF 'THE LEGION OF HONOUR'

FROM THE FRENCH

Star of the brave! — whose beam hath shed
Such glory o'er the quick and dead —
Thou radiant and adored deceit,
Which millions rush'd in arms to greet!
Wild meteor of immortal birth!
Why rise in Heaven to set on Earth?

Souls of slain heroes form'd thy rays;
Eternity flash'd through thy blaze;
The music of thy martial sphere
Was fame on high and honour here;
And thy light broke on human eyes,
Like a volcano of the skies.

Like lava roll'd thy stream of blood,
And swept down empires with its flood;
Earth rock'd beneath thee to her base,
As thou didst lighten through all space;
And the shorn Sun grew dim in air,
And set while thou wert dwelling there.

Before thee rose, and with thee grew,
A rainbow of the loveliest hue
Of three bright colours, each divine,
And fit for that celestial sign;
For Freedom's hand had blended them,
Like tints in an immortal gem.

One tint was of the sunbeam's dyes;
One, the blue depth of Seraph's eyes;
One, the pure Spirit's veil of white
Had robed in radiance of its light:
The three so mingled did beseem
The texture of a heavenly dream

Star of the brave! thy ray is pale,
And darkness must again prevail!
But, oh thou Rainbow of the free!
Our tears and blood must flow for thee.
When thy bright promise fades away,
Our life is but a load of clay.

And Freedom hallows with her tread
The silent cities of the dead;
For beautiful in death are they
Who proudly fall in her array;
And soon, oh Goddess! may we be
For evermore with them or thee!

[First published, 1816.]

DARKNESS

[Both Jeffrey and Walter Scott animadvert on the intense gloom of this poem, which was originally called *The Dream.* Kölbing has traced many of the images to the novel *The Last Man, or Omegarus and Syderia*, published in 1806.]

I HAD a dream, which was not all a dream.
The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;
Morn came and went — and came, and brought no day,
And men forgot their passions in the dread
Of this their desolation; and all hearts
Were chill'd into a selfish prayer for light.
And they did live by watch fires — and the thrones,
The palaces of crownèd kings — the huts,
The habitations of all things which dwell,
Were burnt for beacons; cities were consumed,
And men were gather'd round their blazing homes
To look once more into each other's face.
Happy were those who dwelt within the eye
Of the volcanos, and their mountain-torch:
A fearful hope was all the world contain'd;
Forests were set on fire — but hour by hour
They fell and faded — and the crackling trunks
Extinguish'd with a crash — and all was black.
The brows of men by the despairing light
Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits
The flashes fell upon them; some lay down
And hid their eyes and wept; and some did rest
Their chins upon their clenchèd hands, and smiled;
And others hurried to and fro, and fed
Their funeral piles with fuel, and look'd up
With mad disquietude on the dull sky,
The pall of a past world; and then again
With curses cast them down upon the dust,
And gnash'd their teeth and howl'd. The wild birds shriek'd,
And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,
And flap their useless wings; the wildest brutes
Came tame and tremulous; and vipers crawl'd
And twined themselves among the multitude,
Hissing, but stingless — they were slain for food.
And War, which for a moment was no more,
Did glut himself again; — a meal was bought
With blood, and each sate sullenly apart
Gorging himself in gloom. No love was left;
All earth was but one thought — and that was death,
Immediate and inglorious; and the pang
Of famine fed upon all entrails — men
Died, and their bones were tombless as their flesh;
The meagre by the meagre were devour'd,
Even dogs assail'd their masters, all save one,
And he was faithful to a corse, and kept
The birds and beasts and famish'd men at bay,
Till hunger clung them, or the dropping dead
Lured their lank jaws. Himself sought out no food,
But with a piteous and perpetual moan,
And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand
Which answer'd not with a caress — he died.
The crowd was famish'd by degrees; but two
Of an enormous city did survive,
And they were enemies. They met beside
The dying embers of an altar-place,

Where had been heap'd a mass of holy things
For an unholy usage; they raked up,
And shivering scraped with their cold skeleton hands
The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath
Blew for a little life, and made a flame
Which was a mockery. Then they lifted up
Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld
Each other's aspects — saw, and shriek'd, and died —
Even of their mutual hideousness they died,
Unknowing who he was upon whose brow
Famine had written Fiend. The world was void,
The populous and the powerful was a lump,
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless —
A lump of death — a chaos of hard clay.
The rivers, lakes, and ocean all stood still,
And nothing stirr'd within their silent depths;
Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea,
And their masts fell down piecemeal; as they dropp'd
They slept on the abyss without a surge —
The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,
The Moon, their mistress, had expired before;
The winds were wither'd in the stagnant air,
And the clouds perish'd; Darkness had no need
Of aid from them — She was the Universe.

Diodati, *July*, 1816.

CHURCHILL'S GRAVE

A FACT LITERALLY RENDERED

[Charles Churchill (1731–1764), the satirical poet. On the sheet containing the original draft of these lines, Lord Byron has written: 'The following poem (as most that I have endeavoured to write) is founded on a fact; and this detail is an attempt at a serious imitation of the style of a great poet — its beauties and its defects: I say, the *style;* for the thoughts I claim as my own. In this, if there be anything ridiculous, let it be attributed to me, at least as much as to Mr. Wordsworth, of whom there can exist few greater admirers than myself. I have blended what I would deem to be the beauties as well as defects of his style; and it ought to be remembered, that, in such things, whether there be praise or dispraise, there is always what is called a compliment, however unintentional.']

I stood beside the grave of him who blazed
The comet of a season, and I saw
The humblest of all sepulchres, and gazed
With not the less of sorrow and of awe
On that neglected turf and quiet stone,
With name no clearer than the names unknown,
Which lay unread around it. And I ask'd
The gardener of that ground, why it might be
That for this plant strangers his memory task'd
Through the thick deaths of half a century;
And thus he answer'd — 'Well, I do not know
Why frequent travellers turn to pilgrims so;
He died before my day of Sextonship,
And I had not the digging of this grave.'
And is this all? I thought, — and do we rip
The veil of Immortality, and crave
I know not what of honour and of light
Through unborn ages, to endure this blight?
So soon, and so successless? As I said,
The Architect of all on which we tread,
For Earth is but a tomb-stone, did essay
To extricate remembrance from the clay,
Whose minglings might confuse a Newton's thought,
Were it not that all life must end in one,
Of which we are but dreamers; — as he caught
As 't were the twilight of a former Sun,
Thus spoke he, — 'I believe the man of whom
You wot, who lies in this selected tomb,
Was a most famous writer in his day,
And therefore travellers step from out their way
To pay him honour, — and myself whate'er
Your honour pleases.' — Then most pleased I shook
From out my pocket's avaricious nook
Some certain coins of silver, which as 't were
Perforce I gave this man, though I could spare

So much but inconveniently. Ye smile,
I see ye, ye profane ones! all the while,
Because my homely phrase the truth would tell.
You are the fools, not I — for I did dwell
With a deep thought, and with a soften'd eye,
On that Old Sexton's natural homily,
In which there was Obscurity and Fame, —
The Glory and the Nothing of a Name.

Diodati, 1816.

PROMETHEUS

[There is something in the character of Prometheus which early and strongly attracted Byron — as it did Shelley. Byron's first English exercise at Harrow was a paraphrase from a chorus of the *Prometheus Vinctus*, and there are many allusions to the god in his later works. Indeed his mind wavered almost to the end between the heroic defiance of Prometheus and the cynical defiance of Don Juan.]

Titan! to whose immortal eyes
The sufferings of mortality,
Seen in their sad reality,
Were not as things that gods despise;
What was thy pity's recompense?
A silent suffering, and intense;
The rock, the vulture, and the chain,
All that the proud can feel of pain,
The agony they do not show,
The suffocating sense of woe,
Which speaks but in its loneliness,
And then is jealous lest the sky
Should have a listener, nor will sigh
Until its voice is echoless.

Titan! to thee the strife was given
Between the suffering and the will,
Which torture where they cannot kill;
And the inexorable Heaven,
And the deaf tyranny of Fate,
The ruling principle of Hate,
Which for its pleasure doth create
The things it may annihilate,
Refused thee even the boon to die:
The wretched gift eternity
Was thine — and thou hast borne it well.
All that the Thunderer wrung from thee
Was but the menace which flung back
On him the torments of thy rack;
The fate thou didst so well foresee,
But would not to appease him tell;
And in thy Silence was his Sentence,
And in his Soul a vain repentance,
And evil dread so ill dissembled,
That in his hand the lightnings trembled.

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,
To render with thy precepts less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And strengthen Man with his own mind;
But baffled as thou wert from high,
Still in thy patient energy,
In the endurance, and repulse
Of thine impenetrable Spirit,
Which Earth and Heaven could not convulse,
A mighty lesson we inherit:
Thou art a symbol and a sign
To Mortals of their fate and force;
Like thee, Man is in part divine,
A troubled stream from a pure source;
And Man in portions can foresee
His own funereal destiny,
His wretchedness, and his resistance,
And his sad unallied existence:
To which his Spirit may oppose
Itself — and equal to all woes,
And a firm will, and a deep sense,
Which even in torture can descry
Its own concenter'd recompense,
Triumphant where it dares defy,
And making Death a Victory.

Diodati, *July*, 1816.

A FRAGMENT

Could I remount the river of my years
To the first fountain of our smiles and tears,
I would not trace again the stream of hours
Between their outworn banks of wither'd flowers,
But bid it flow as now — until it glides
Into the number of the nameless tides.

. . . .

What is this Death? — a quiet of the heart?
The whole of that of which we are a part?
For life is but a vision — what I see
Of all which lives, alone is life to me;
And being so — the absent are the dead,
Who haunt us from tranquillity, and spread
A dreary shroud around us, and invest
With sad remembrancers our hours of rest.

The absent are the dead — for they are cold,
And ne'er can be what once we did behold;
And they are changed, and cheerless, — or if yet
The unforgotten do not all forget,
Since thus divided — equal must it be
If the deep barrier be of earth or sea;
It may be both — but one day end it must
In the dark union of insensate dust.
The under-earth inhabitants — are they
But mingled millions decomposed to clay?
The ashes of a thousand ages spread
Wherever man has trodden or shall tread?
Or do they in their silent cities dwell
Each in his incommunicative cell?
Or have they their own language? and a sense
Of breathless being? — darken'd and intense
As midnight in her solitude? — O Earth!
Where are the past? — and wherefore had they birth?
The dead are thy inheritors — and we
But bubbles on thy surface; and the key
Of thy profundity is in the grave,
The ebon portal of thy peopled cave,
Where I would walk in spirit, and behold
Our elements resolved to things untold,
And fathom hidden wonders, and explore
The essence of great bosoms now no more.

. . . .

Diodati, *July*, 1816. [First published, 1830.]

SONNET TO LAKE LEMAN

Rousseau, Voltaire, our Gibbon, and De Staël —
Leman! these names are worthy of thy shore,
Thy shore of names like these! — Wert thou no more,
Their memory thy remembrance would recall:
To them thy banks were lovely as to all,
But they have made them lovelier, for the lore
Of mighty minds doth hallow in the core
Of human hearts the ruin of a wall
Where dwelt the wise and wondrous; but by *thee*,
How much more, Lake of Beauty! do we feel,
In sweetly gliding o'er thy crystal sea,
The wild glow of that not ungentle zeal,
Which of the heirs of immortality
Is proud, and makes the breath of glory real!

Diodati, *July*, 1816. [First published with the *Prisoner of Chillon*, in 1816.]

MONODY ON THE DEATH OF THE RIGHT HON. R. B. SHERIDAN

SPOKEN AT DRURY-LANE THEATRE

[Mr. Sheridan died the 7th of July, 1816, and this monody was written at Diodati on the 17th, at the request of Mr. Douglas Kinnaird. 'I did as well as I could,' says Lord Byron, 'but where I have not my choice, I pretend to answer for nothing.' (Letter to Murray, September 29, 1816.) For Byron's admiration of Sheridan, see *Letters*, *passim.*]

When the last sunshine of expiring day
In summer's twilight weeps itself away,
Who hath not felt the softness of the hour
Sink on the heart, as dew along the flower?
With a pure feeling which absorbs and awes
While Nature makes that melancholy pause,
Her breathing moment on the bridge where Time
Of light and darkness forms an arch sublime,
Who hath not shared that calm so still and deep,
The voiceless thought which would not speak but weep,
A holy concord — and a bright regret,
A glorious sympathy with suns that set?
'T is not harsh sorrow — but a tenderer woe,
Nameless, but dear to gentle hearts below,
Felt without bitterness — but full and clear,
A sweet dejection — a transparent tear,
Unmix'd with worldly grief or selfish stain,
Shed without shame and secret without pain.

Even as the tenderness that hour instils
When Summer's day declines along the hills,
So feels the fulness of our heart and eyes
When all of Genius which can perish dies.
A mighty Spirit is eclipsed — a Power
Hath pass'd from day to darkness — to whose hour

Of light no likeness is bequeath'd — no name,
Focus at once of all the rays of Fame!
The flash of Wit, the bright Intelligence,
The beam of Song, the blaze of Eloquence,
Set with their Sun, but still have left behind
The enduring produce of immortal Mind;
Fruits of a genial morn, and glorious noon,
A deathless part of him who died too soon.
But small that portion of the wondrous whole,
These sparkling segments of that circling soul,
Which all embraced — and lighten'd over all,
To cheer — to pierce — to please — or to appal.
From the charm'd council to the festive board,
Of human feelings the unbounded lord;
In whose acclaim the loftiest voices vied,
The praised — the proud — who made his praise their pride.
When the loud cry of trampled Hindostan
Arose to Heaven in her appeal from man,
His was the thunder, his the avenging rod,
The wrath, the delegated voice of God,
Which shook the nations through his lips and blazed
Till vanquish'd senates trembled as they praised.

And here, oh! here, where yet all young and warm
The gay creations of his spirit charm,
The matchless dialogue, the deathless wit,
Which knew not what it was to intermit;
The glowing portraits, fresh from life, that bring
Home to our hearts the truth from which they spring;
These wondrous beings of his Fancy, wrought
To fulness by the fiat of his thought,
Here in their first abode you still may meet,
Bright with the hues of his Promethean heat;
A halo of the light of other days,
Which still the splendour of its orb betrays.

But should there be to whom the fatal blight
Of failing Wisdom yields a base delight,
Men who exult when minds of heavenly tone
Jar in the music which was born their own,
Still let them pause — ah! little do they know
That what to them seem'd Vice might be but Woe.
Hard is his fate on whom the public gaze
Is fix'd for ever to detract or praise;
Repose denies her requiem to his name,
And Folly loves the martyrdom of Fame.
The secret enemy whose sleepless eye
Stands sentinel, accuser, judge, and spy;
The foe, the fool, the jealous, and the vain,
The envious who but breathe in others' pain —
Behold the host! delighting to deprave,
Who track the steps of Glory to the grave,
Watch every fault that daring Genius owes
Half to the ardour which its birth bestows,
Distort the truth, accumulate the lie,
And pile the Pyramid of Calumny!
These are his portion — but if join'd to these
Gaunt Poverty should league with deep Disease,
If the high Spirit must forget to soar,
And stoop to strive with Misery at the door,
To soothe Indignity — and face to face
Meet sordid Rage — and wrestle with Disgrace,
To find in Hope but the renew'd caress,
The serpent-fold of further Faithlessness: —
If such may be the Ills which men assail,
What marvel if at last the mightiest fail?
Breasts to whom all the strength of feeling given
Bear hearts electric — charged with fire from Heaven,
Black with the rude collision, inly torn,
By clouds surrounded, and on whirlwinds borne,
Driven o'er the lowering atmosphere that nurst
Thoughts which have turn'd to thunder — scorch — and burst.

But far from us and from our mimic scene
Such things should be — if such have ever been;

Ours be the gentler wish, the kinder task,
To give the tribute Glory need not ask,
To mourn the vanish'd beam and add our mite
Of praise in payment of a long delight.
Ye Orators! whom yet our councils yield,
Mourn for the veteran Hero of your field!
The worthy rival of the wondrous *Three*,
Whose words were sparks of Immortality!
Ye Bards! to whom the Drama's Muse is dear,
He was your Master — emulate him *here!*
Ye men of wit and social eloquence!
He was your brother — bear his ashes hence!
While Powers of mind almost of boundless range,
Complete in kind — as various in their change,
While Eloquence — Wit — Poesy — and Mirth,
That humbler Harmonist of care on Earth,
Survive within our souls — while lives our sense
Of pride in Merit's proud pre-eminence,
Long shall we seek his likeness — long in vain,
And turn to all of him which may remain,
Sighing that Nature form'd but one such man,
And broke the die — in moulding Sheridan.

A VERY MOURNFUL BALLAD

ON THE SIEGE AND CONQUEST OF ALHAMA

Which, in the Arabic language, is to the following purport.

The effect of the original ballad — which existed both in Spanish and Arabic — was such, that it was forbidden to be sung by the Moors, on pain of death, within Granada. [The Spanish of this ballad, which was originally printed side by side with the translation, is not known to exist elsewhere in its integrity. According to Mr. E. H. Coleridge it is 'a cento of three or more ballads which are included in the *Guerras Civiles de Granada* of Gines Perez de Hita, published at Saragossa in 1595.']

The Moorish King rides up and down
Through Granada's royal town;
From Elvira's gates to those
Of Bivarambla on he goes.
Woe is me, Alhama!

Letters to the monarch tell
How Alhama's city fell:
In the fire the scroll he threw,
And the messenger he slew.
Woe is me, Alhama!

He quits his mule, and mounts his horse,
And through the street directs his course;
Through the street of Zacatin
To the Alhambra spurring in.
Woe is me, Alhama!

When the Alhambra walls he gain'd,
On the moment he ordain'd
That the trumpet straight should sound
With the silver clarion round.
Woe is me, Alhama!

And when the hollow drums of war
Beat the loud alarm afar,
That the Moors of town and plain
Might answer to the martial strain,
Woe is me, Alhama!

Then the Moors, by this aware
That bloody Mars recall'd them there,
One by one, and two by two,
To a mighty squadron grew.
Woe is me, Alhama!

Out then spake an aged Moor
In these words the king before:
'Wherefore call on us, O King?
What may mean this gathering?'
Woe is me, Alhama!

'Friends! ye have, alas! to know
Of a most disastrous blow,
That the Christians, stern and bold,
Have obtain'd Alhama's hold.'
Woe is me, Alhama!

Out then spake old Alfaqui,
With his beard so white to see:
'Good King! thou art justly served,
Good King! this thou hast deserved.
Woe is me, Alhama!

'By thee were slain, in evil hour,
The Abencerrage, Granada's flower;
And strangers were received by thee,
Of Cordova the Chivalry.
Woe is me, Alhama!

'And for this, O King! is sent
On thee a double chastisement:
Thee and thine, thy crown and realm,
One last wreck shall overwhelm.
Woe is me, Alhama!

'He who holds no laws in awe,
He must perish by the law;
And Granada must be won,
And thyself with her undone.'
Woe is me, Alhama!

Fire flash'd from out the old Moor's eyes;
The Monarch's wrath began to rise,
Because he answer'd, and because
He spake exceeding well of laws.
Woe is me, Alhama!

'There is no law to say such things
As may disgust the ear of kings!'—
Thus, snorting with his choler, said
The Moorish King, and doom'd him dead.
Woe is me, Alhama!

Moor Alfaqui! Moor Alfaqui!
Though thy beard so hoary be,
The King hath sent to have thee seized,
For Alhama's loss displeased;
Woe is me, Alhama!

And to fix thy head upon
High Alhambra's loftiest stone;
That this for thee should be the law,
And others tremble when they saw.
Woe is me, Alhama!

'Cavalier, and man of worth!
Let these words of mine go forth;
Let the Moorish Monarch know
That to him I nothing owe.
Woe is me, Alhama!

'But on my soul Alhama weighs,
And on my inmost spirit preys;
And if the King his land hath lost,
Yet others may have lost the most.
Woe is me, Alhama!

'Sires have lost their children, wives
Their lords, and valiant men their lives;
One what best his love might claim
Hath lost, another wealth, or fame.
Woe is me, Alhama!

'I lost a damsel in that hour,
Of all the land the loveliest flower;
Doubloons a hundred I would pay,
And think her ransom cheap that day.'
Woe is me, Alhama!

And as these things the old Moor said,
They sever'd from the trunk his head;
And to the Alhambra's wall with speed
'T was carried, as the King decreed.
Woe is me, Alhama!

And men and infants therein weep
Their loss, so heavy and so deep;
Granada's ladies, all she rears
Within her walls, burst into tears.
Woe is me, Alhama!

And from the windows o'er the walls
The sable web of mourning falls;
The King weeps as a woman o'er
His loss, for it is much and sore.
Woe is me, Alhama!

[First published, 1818.]

TRANSLATION FROM VITTORELLI

ON A NUN

Sonnet composed in the name of a father, whose daughter had recently died shortly after her marriage; and addressed to the father of her who had lately taken the veil.

Of two fair virgins, modest, though admired,
Heaven made us happy; and now, wretched sires,
Heaven for a nobler doom their worth desires,
And, gazing upon *either*, *both* required.
Mine, while the torch of Hymen newly fired
Becomes extinguish'd, soon — too soon — expires;
But thine, within the closing grate retired,
Eternal captive, to her God aspires.
But *thou* at least from out the jealous door,
Which shuts between your never-meeting eyes,
Mayst hear her sweet and pious voice once more:

I to the marble, where *my daughter* lies,
Rush, — the swoln flood of bitterness I pour,
And knock, and knock, and knock — but none replies.

[First published, 1818.]

VENICE

A FRAGMENT

[First published in the Edition of 1901 from a manuscript in the possession of Mr. Murray.]

'T IS midnight — but it is not dark
Within thy spacious place, St. Mark!
The Lights within, the Lamps without,
Shine above the revel rout.
The brazen Steeds are glittering o'er
The holy building's massy door,
Glittering with their collars of gold,
The goodly work of the days of old —
And the wingèd Lion stern and solemn
Frowns from the height of his hoary column,
Facing the palace in which doth lodge
The ocean-city's dreaded Doge.
The palace is proud — but near it lies,
Divided by the 'Bridge of Sighs,'
The dreary dwelling where the State
Enchains the captives of their hate:
These — they perish or they pine;
But which their doom may none divine:
Many have pass'd that Arch of pain,
But none retraced their steps again.

It is a princely colonnade!
And wrought around a princely place,
When that vast edifice display'd
Looks with its venerable face
Over the far and subject sea,
Which makes the fearless isles so free!
And 't is a strange and noble pile,
Pillar'd into many an aisle:
Every pillar fair to see,
Marble — jasper — and porphyry —
The church of St. Mark — which stands hard by
With fretted pinnacles on high,
And Cupola and minaret;
More like the mosque of orient lands,
Than the fanes wherein we pray,
And Mary's blessèd likeness stands. —

VENICE, *December* 6, 1816.

ON SAM ROGERS

QUESTION AND ANSWER

[One of the malicious poems which Byron wrote recklessly on the spur of the moment without intention of publishing. It was printed after his death in *Fraser's Magazine*, January, 1833. Byron's long friendship with Rogers may be traced in the *Letters*, but he seems not to have fully trusted the man, however much he admired his 'classic' verses. In a letter to Murray (February 20, 1818) he speaks his suspicions loudly.]

QUESTION

NOSE and chin would shame a knocker;
Wrinkles that would puzzle Cocker;
Mouth which marks the envious scorner,
With a scorpion in each corner,
Turning its quick tail to sting you
In the place that most may wring you;
Eyes of lead-like hue, and gummy;
Carcass pick'd out from some mummy;
Bowels (but they were forgotten,
Save the liver, and that 's rotten);
Skin all sallow, flesh all sodden, —
Form the devil would frighten God in.
Is 't a corpse stuck up for show,
Galvanised at times to go?
With the Scripture in connection,
New proof of the resurrection?
Vampire, ghost, or goul, what is it?
I would walk ten miles to miss it.

ANSWER

Many passengers arrest one,
To demand the same free question.
Shorter 's my reply, and franker, —
That 's the Bard, the Beau, the Banker.
Yet if you could bring about
Just to turn him inside out,
Satan's self would seem less sooty,
And his present aspect — Beauty.
Mark that (as he masks the bilious
Air, so softly supercilious)
Chasten'd bow, and mock humility,
Almost sicken to servility;
Hear his tone (which is to talking
That which creeping is to walking,
Now on all-fours, now on tip-toe);
Hear the tales he lends his lip to;
Little hints of heavy scandals;
Every friend in turn he handles;

All which women or which men do,
Glides forth in an innuendo,
Clothed in odds and ends of humour —
Herald of each paltry rumour,
From divorces down to dresses,
Women's frailties, men's excesses,
All which life presents of evil
Make for him a constant revel.
You 're his foe, for that he fears you,
And in absence blasts and sears you:
You 're his friend — for that he hates you,
First caresses, and then baits you —
Darting on the opportunity
When to do it with impunity:
You are neither — then he 'll flatter,
Till he finds some trait for satire;
Hunts your weak point out, then shows it
Where it injures to disclose it,
In the mode that 's most invidious,
Adding every trait that 's hideous —
From the bile, whose blackening river
Rushes through his Stygian liver.
Then he thinks himself a lover —
Why? I really can't discover,
In his mind, age, face, or figure;
Viper-broth might give him vigour, —
Let him keep the cauldron steady,
He the venom has already.
For his faults — he has but *one*, —
'T is but envy, when all 's done.
He but pays the pain he suffers,
Clipping, like a pair of snuffers,
Lights which ought to burn the brighter
For this temporary blighter.
He 's the cancer of his species,
And will eat himself to pieces, —
Plague personified, and famine, —
Devil, whose sole delight is damning.

For his merits, would you know 'em?
Once he wrote a pretty Poem.
[1818.]

THE DUEL

[First published in the Edition of 1901 from a manuscript in the possession of Mr. Murray. These lines, addressed to Mary Chaworth, allude to the duel fought between her granduncle, William Chaworth, Esq., of Annesley, and the poet's granduncle, the fifth Lord Byron, on January 26, 1765. Mr. Chaworth fell in the encounter, and his antagonist was tried before the House of Lords on the charge of murder, but acquitted by a verdict of 'manslaughter.']

'T IS fifty years, and yet their fray
To us might seem but yesterday.
'T is fifty years, and three to boot,
Since, hand to hand, and foot to foot,
And heart to heart, and sword to sword,
One of our Ancestors was gored.
I 've seen the sword that slew him; he,
The slain, stood in a like degree
To thee, as he, the Slayer, stood
(Oh had it been but other blood!)
In kin and Chieftainship to me.
Thus came the Heritage to thee.

To me the Lands of him who slew
Came through a line of yore renown'd;
For I can boast a race as true
To Monarchs crown'd, and some discrown'd,
As ever Britain's Annals knew:
For the first Conqueror gave us Ground,
And the last Conquer'd own'd the line
Which was my mother's, and is mine.

I loved thee — I will not say *how*,
Since things like these are best forgot:
Perhaps thou mayst imagine now
Who loved thee, and who loved thee not.
And thou wert wedded to another,
And I at last another wedded:
I am a father, thou a mother,
To Strangers vow'd, with strangers bedded
For land to land, even blood to blood —
Since leagued of yore our fathers were —
Our manors and our birthright stood;
And not unequal had I woo'd,
If to have woo'd thee I could dare.
But this I never dared — even yet
When nought is left but to forget.
I feel that I could only love:
To sue was never meant for me,
And least of all to sue to thee;
For many a bar, and many a feud,
Though never told, well understood,
Roll'd like a river wide between —
And then there was the Curse of blood,
Which even my Heart's cannot remove.
Alas! how many things have been!
Since we were friends; for I alone
Feel more for thee than can be shown.

How many things! I loved thee — thou
Lovedst me not: another was
The Idol of thy virgin vow,
And I was, what I am, Alas!

And what he is, and what thou art,
  And what we were, is like the rest:
  We must endure it as a test,
And old Ordeal of the Heart.
    Venice, *December* 29, 1818.

STANZAS TO THE PO

[These stanzas were first published in 1824 by Medwin in the *Conversations.* According to a statement of the Countess Guiccioli they were composed by Byron in April, 1819, while actually sailing on the Po from Venice to Ravenna, where he was to join her. The stanzas were supposed by the earlier editors to have been transmitted to London in a letter to Murray (May 8, 1820), with the direction: 'They must not be published: pray recollect this, as they are mere verses of society, and written upon private feelings and passions.' Mr. E. H. Coleridge points out several incongruities in these statements, and suggests that the poem alluded to as 'mere verses of society' is not this address to the Po, but the somewhat cynical rhymes, 'Could Love forever, Run like a river.' The theory is plausible, but no more. In a letter to the *Athenæum*, August 24, 1901, Mr. Richard Edgcumbe suggests that the poem is to the river Trent, and is concerned with Mrs. Chaworth Musters.]

River, that rollest by the ancient walls,
  Where dwells the lady of my love, when she
Walks by thy brink, and there perchance recalls
  A faint and fleeting memory of me;

What if thy deep and ample stream should be
  A mirror of my heart, where she may read
The thousand thoughts I now betray to thee,
  Wild as thy wave, and headlong as thy speed!

What do I say — a mirror of my heart?
  Are not thy waters sweeping, dark, and strong?
Such as my feelings were and are, thou art;
  And such as thou art were my passions long.

Time may have somewhat tamed them, — not for ever;
  Thou overflow'st thy banks, and not for aye
Thy bosom overboils, congenial river!
  Thy floods subside, and mine have sunk away —

But left long wrecks behind: and now again,
  Borne in our old unchanged career, we move;
Thou tendest wildly onwards to the main,
  And I — to loving *one* I should not love.

The current I behold will sweep beneath
  Her native walls and murmur at her feet;
Her eyes will look on thee, when she shall breathe
  The twilight air, unharm'd by summer's heat.

She will look on thee, — I have look'd on thee,
  Full of that thought; and, from that moment, ne'er
Thy waters could I dream of, name, or see,
  Without the inseparable sigh for her!

Her bright eyes will be imaged in thy stream, —
  Yes! they will meet the wave I gaze on now:
Mine cannot witness, even in a dream,
  That happy wave repass me in its flow!

The wave that bears my tears returns no more:
  Will she return by whom that wave shall sweep? —
Both tread thy banks, both wander on thy shore,
  I by thy source, she by the dark-blue deep.

But that which keepeth us apart is not
  Distance, nor depth of wave, nor space of earth,
But the distraction of a various lot,
  As various as the climates of our birth.

A stranger loves the lady of the land,
  Born far beyond the mountains, but his blood
Is all meridian, as if never fann'd
  By the black wind that chills the polar flood.

My blood is all meridian; were it not,
I had not left my clime, nor should I be,
In spite of tortures, ne'er to be forgot,
A slave again of love, — at least of thee.

'T is vain to struggle — let me perish young —
Live as I lived, and love as I have loved;
To dust if I return, from dust I sprung,
And then, at least, my heart can ne'er be moved.

June, 1819. [First published, 1824.]

SONNET ON THE NUPTIALS OF THE MARQUIS ANTONIO CAVALLI WITH THE COUNTESS CLELIA RASPONI OF RAVENNA

[First published in the Edition of 1901 from a manuscript in the possession of the Lady Dorchester.]

A noble Lady of the Italian shore,
Lovely and young, herself a happy bride,
Commands a verse, and will not be denied,
From me a wandering Englishman; I tore
One sonnet, but invoke the muse once more
To hail these gentle hearts which Love has tied,
In Youth, Birth, Beauty, genially allied,
And blest with Virtue's soul and Fortune's store.
A sweeter language and a luckier bard
Were worthier of your hopes, Auspicious Pair!
And of the sanctity of Hymen's shrine,
But, — since I cannot but obey the Fair,
To render your new state your true reward,
May your Fate be like *Hers*, and unlike *mine*.

Ravenna, *July* 31, 1819

SONNET TO THE PRINCE REGENT

ON THE REPEAL OF LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD'S FORFEITURE

To be the father of the fatherless,
To stretch the hand from the throne's height, and raise
His offspring, who expired in other days
To make thy sire's sway by a kingdom less,—
This is to be a monarch, and repress
Envy into unutterable praise.
Dismiss thy guard, and trust thee to such traits,
For who would lift a hand, except to bless?
Were it not easy, Sir, and is 't not sweet
To make thyself beloved? and to be
Omnipotent by mercy's means? for thus
Thy Sovereignty would grow but more complete;
A despot thou, and yet thy people free,
And by the heart, not hand, enslaving us.

Bologna, *August* 12, 1819.

STANZAS

[A friend of Lord Byron's, who was with him at Ravenna when he wrote these Stanzas, says: 'They were composed, like many others, with no view of publication, but merely to relieve himself in a moment of suffering. He had been painfully excited by some circumstances which appeared to make it necessary that he should immediately quit Italy, and in the day and the hour that he wrote the song was labouring under an access of fever.' — So reads the note in the Edition of 1831. It is to be remarked, however, that Byron was not at Ravenna but at Venice on the date of the poem.]

Could Love for ever
Run like a river,
And Time's endeavour
Be tried in vain —
No other pleasure
With this could measure,
And like a treasure
We 'd hug the chain.
But since our sighing
Ends not in dying,
And, form'd for flying,
Love plumes his wing;
Then for this reason
Let 's love a season;
But let that season be only Spring.

When lovers parted
Feel broken-hearted,
And, all hopes thwarted,
Expect to die;
A few years older,
Ah! how much colder
They might behold her
For whom they sigh!
When link'd together,
In every weather,

They pluck Love's feather
From out his wing —
He 'll stay for ever,
But sadly shiver
Without his plumage, when past the Spring.

Like Chiefs of Faction,
His life is action —
A formal paction
That curbs his reign,
Obscures his glory,
Despot no more, he
Such territory
Quits with disdain.
Still, still advancing,
With banners glancing,
His power enhancing,
He must move on —
Repose but cloys him,
Retreat destroys him,
Love brooks not a degraded throne.

Wait not, fond lover!
Till years are over,
And then recover,
As from a dream.
While each bewailing
The other's failing,
With wrath and railing,
All hideous seem —
While first decreasing,
Yet not quite ceasing,
Wait not till teasing
All passion blight:
If once diminish'd
Love's reign is finish'd —
Then part in friendship, — and bid good-night.

So shall Affection
To recollection
The dear connection
Bring back with joy:
You had not waited
Till, tired or hated,
Your passions sated
Began to cloy.
Your last embraces
Leave no cold traces —
The same fond faces
As through the past;
And eyes, the mirrors
Of your sweet errors,
Reflect but rapture — not least though last.

True, separations
Ask more than patience;
What desperations
From such have risen!
But yet remaining,
What is 't but chaining
Hearts which, once waning,
Beat 'gainst their prison?
Time can but cloy love,
And use destroy love:
The wingèd boy, Love,
Is but for boys —
You 'll find it torture
Though sharper, shorter,
To wean, and not wear out your joys.

December 1, 1819. [First published, 1832.]

ODE TO A LADY WHOSE LOVER WAS KILLED BY A BALL, WHICH AT THE SAME TIME SHIVERED A PORTRAIT NEXT HIS HEART

Motto

On peut trouver des femmes qui n'ont jamais eu de galanterie, mais il est rare d'en trouver qui n'en aient jamais eu qu'une. — [*Réflexions* . . . du Duc de la Rochefoucauld, No. lxxiii.]

[First published in the Edition of 1901 from a manuscript in the possession of Mr. Murray.]

Lady! in whose heroic port
And Beauty, Victor even of Time,
And haughty lineaments, appear
Much that is awful, more that 's dear —
Wherever human hearts resort
There must have been for thee a Court,
And Thou by acclamation Queen,
Where never Sovereign yet had been.
That eye so soft, and yet severe,
Perchance might look on Love as Crime;
And yet — regarding thee more near —
The traces of an unshed tear
Compress'd back to the heart,
And mellow'd Sadness in thine air,
Which shows that Love hath once been there,
To those who watch thee will disclose
More than ten thousand tomes of woes
Wrung from the vain Romancer's art.
With thee how proudly Love hath dwelt!
His full Divinity was felt,

Maddening the heart he could not melt,
Till Guilt became Sublime;
But never yet did Beauty's Zone
For him surround a lovelier throne,
Than in that bosom once his own:
And he the Sun and Thou the Clime
Together must have made a Heaven
For which the Future would be given.

And thou hast loved — Oh! not in vain!
And not as common Mortals love.
The Fruit of Fire is Ashes,
The Ocean's tempest dashes
Wrecks and the dead upon the rocky shore:
True Passion must the all-searching changes prove,
The Agony of Pleasure and of Pain,
Till Nothing but the Bitterness remain;
And the Heart's Spectre flitting through the brain
Scoffs at the Exorcism which would remove.

And where is He thou lovèdst? in the tomb,
Where should the happy Lover be!
For him could Time unfold a brighter doom,
Or offer aught like thee?
He in the thickest battle died,
Where Death is Pride;
And *Thou* his widow — not his bride,
Were 't not more free —
Here where all love, till Love is made
A bondage or a trade,
Here — thou so redolent of Beauty,
In whom Caprice had seem'd a duty,
Thou, who couldst trample and despise
The holiest chain of human ties
For him, the dear One in thine eyes,
Broke it no more.
Thy heart was wither'd to its Core,
Its hopes, its fears, its feelings o'er:
Thy Blood grew Ice when *his* was shed,
And Thou the Vestal of the Dead.

Thy Lover died, as All
Who truly love should die;
For such are worthy in the fight to fall
Triumphantly.
No Cuirass o'er that glowing heart
The deadly bullet turn'd apart:
Love had bestow'd a richer Mail,
Like Thetis on her Son;
But hers at last was vain, and thine could fail —
The hero's and the lover's race was run.
Thy worshipp'd portrait, thy sweet face,
Without that bosom kept its place
As Thou *within*.
Oh! enviously destined Ball!
Shivering thine imaged charms and all
Those Charms would win:
Together pierced, the fatal Stroke hath gored
Votary and Shrine, the adoring and the adored.
That Heart's last throb was thine, that blood
Baptized thine Image in its flood,
And gushing from the fount of Faith
O'erflow'd with Passion even in Death,
Constant to thee as in its hour
Of rapture in the secret bower.
Thou too hast kept thy plight full well,
As many a baffled Heart can tell.

THE IRISH AVATAR

'And Ireland, like a bastinadoed elephant, kneeling to receive the paltry rider.' — Curran.

[This satire was sent in a letter to Moore (September 17, 1821), then in Paris, with the comment: 'The enclosed lines, as you will directly perceive, are written by the Rev. W. L. Bowles. Of course, it is for *him* to deny them, if they are not.' Mr. E. H. Coleridge explains that 'the word "Avatar" is not only applied ironically to George IV. as the "Messiah of Royalty," but metaphorically to the poem, which would descend in the "Capacity of Preserver."' The occasion of the satire was an attack on Moore in *John Bull*, and the servility of the Irish when George IV. 'entered Dublin in triumph within ten days of the death of Queen Caroline.']

Ere the daughter of Brunswick is cold in her grave,
And her ashes still float to their home o'er the tide,
Lo! George the triumphant speeds over the wave,
To the long-cherish'd isle which he loved like his — bride.

True, the great of her bright and brief era are gone,
The rainbow-like epoch where Freedom could pause

For the few little years, out of centuries won,
Which betray'd not, or crush'd not, or wept not her cause.

True, the chains of the Catholic clank o'er his rags,
The castle still stands, and the senate 's no more,
And the famine which dwelt on her freedomless crags
Is extending its steps to her desolate shore.

To her desolate shore — where the emigrant stands
For a moment to gaze ere he flies from his hearth;
Tears fall on his chain, though it drops from his hands,
For the dungeon he quits is the place of his birth.

But he comes! the Messiah of royalty comes!
Like a goodly Leviathan roll'd from the waves!
Then receive him as best such an advent becomes,
With a legion of cooks, and an army of slaves!

He comes in the promise and bloom of threescore,
To perform in the pageant the sovereign's part —
But long live the shamrock which shadows him o'er!
Could the green in his *hat* be transferr'd to his *heart!*

Could that long-wither'd spot but be verdant again,
And a new spring of noble affections arise —
Then might freedom forgive thee this dance in thy chain,
And this shout of thy slavery which saddens the skies.

Is it madness or meanness which clings to thee now?
Were he God — as he is but the commonest clay,
With scarce fewer wrinkles than sins on his brow —
Such servile devotion might shame him away.

Ay, roar in his train! let thine orators lash
Their fanciful spirits to pamper his pride —
Not thus did thy Grattan indignantly flash
His soul o'er the freedom implored and denied.

Ever glorious Grattan! the best of the good!
So simple in heart, so sublime in the rest!
With all which Demosthenes wanted endued,
And his rival or victor in all he possess'd.

Ere Tully arose in the zenith of Rome,
Though unequall'd, preceded, the task was begun —
But Grattan sprung up like a god from the tomb
Of ages, the first, last, the saviour, the *one!*

With the skill of an Orpheus to soften the brute;
With the fire of Prometheus to kindle mankind;
Even Tyranny listening sate melted or mute,
And Corruption shrunk scorch'd from the glance of his mind.

But back to our theme! Back to despots and slaves!
Feasts furnish'd by Famine! rejoicings by Pain!
True freedom but *welcomes*, while slavery still *raves*,
When a week's saturnalia hath loosen'd her chain.

Let the poor squalid splendour thy wreck can afford
(As the bankrupt's profusion his ruin would hide)
Gild over the palace; lo, Erin, thy lord!
Kiss his foot with thy blessing, his blessings denied!

Or *if* freedom past hope be extorted at last,
If the idol of brass find his feet are of clay,
Must what terror or policy wring forth be class'd
With what monarchs ne'er give, but as wolves yield their prey?

Each brute hath its nature, a king's is to *reign*, —
To *reign!* in that word see, ye ages, comprised
The cause of the curses all annals contain,
From Cæsar the dreaded to George the despised!

Wear, Fingal, thy trapping! O'Connell, proclaim
His accomplishments! *His!!!* and thy country convince
Half an age's contempt was an error of fame,
And that 'Hal is the rascaliest, sweetest *young* prince!'

Will thy yard of blue riband, poor Fingal, recall
The fetters from millions of Catholic limbs?
r, has it not bound thee the fastest of all
The slaves, who now hail their betrayer with hymns?

Ay! 'Build him a dwelling!' let each give his mite!
Till, like Babel, the new royal dome hath arisen!
et thy beggars and helots their pittance unite —
And a palace bestow for a poor-house and prison!

pread — spread, for Vitellius, the royal repast,
Till the gluttonous despot be stuff'd to the gorge!
nd the roar of his drunkards proclaim him at last
The Fourth of the fools and oppressors call'd 'George!'

et the tables be loaded with feasts till they groan!
Till they *groan* like thy people, through ages of woe!
Let the wine flow around the old Bacchanal's throne,
Like their blood which has flow'd, and which yet has to flow.

But let not *his* name be thine idol alone —
On his right hand behold a Sejanus appears!
Thine own Castlereagh! let him still be thine own!
A wretch never named but with curses and jeers!

Till now, when the isle which should blush for his birth,
Deep, deep as the gore which he shed on her soil,
Seems proud of the reptile which crawl'd from her earth,
And for murder repays him with shouts and a smile!

Without one single ray of her genius, without
The fancy, the manhood, the fire of her race —
The miscreant who well might plunge Erin in doubt
If *she* ever gave birth to a being so base.

If she did — let her long-boasted proverb be hush'd,
Which proclaims that from Erin no reptile can spring —
See the cold-blooded serpent, with venom full flush'd,
Still warming its folds in the breast of a king!

Shout, drink, feast, and flatter! Oh! Erin, how low
Wert thou sunk by misfortune and tyranny, till
Thy welcome of tyrants had plunged thee below
The depth of thy deep in a deeper gulf still.

My voice, though but humble, was raised for thy right,
My vote, as a freeman's, still voted thee free,
This hand, though but feeble, would arm in thy fight,
And this heart, though outworn, had a throb still for *thee*!

Yes, I loved thee and thine, though thou art not my land,
I have known noble hearts and great souls in thy sons,
And I wept with the world o'er the patriot band
Who are gone, but I weep them no longer as once.

For happy are they now reposing afar, —
Thy Grattan, thy Curran, thy Sheridan, all
Who, for years, were the chiefs in the eloquent war,
And redeem'd, if they have not retarded, thy fall.

Yes, happy are they in their cold English graves!
Their shades cannot start to thy shouts of to-day —
Nor the steps of enslavers and chain-kissing slaves
Be stamp'd in the turf o'er their fetterless clay.

Till now I had envied thy sons and their shore,
Though their virtues were hunted, their liberties fled;
There was something so warm and sublime in the core
Of an Irishman's heart, that I envy — thy *dead*.

Or, if aught in my bosom can quench for an hour
My contempt for a nation so servile, though sore,
Which though trod like the worm will not turn upon power,
'T is the glory of Grattan, and genius of Moore!

September 16, 1821. [First published, 1824.]

STANZAS WRITTEN ON THE ROAD BETWEEN FLORENCE AND PISA

Oh, talk not to me of a name great in story;
The days of our youth are the days of our glory;
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty
Are worth all your laurels, though ever so plenty.

What are garlands and crowns to the brow that is wrinkled?
'T is but as a dead-flower with May-dew besprinkled:
Then away with all such from the head that is hoary!
What care I for the wreaths that can *only* give glory?

Oh Fame! — if I e'er took delight in thy praises,
'T was less for the sake of thy high-sounding phrases,
Than to see the bright eyes of the dear one discover
She thought that I was not unworthy to love her.

There chiefly I sought thee, *there* only I found thee;
Her glance was the best of the rays that surround thee;
When it sparkled o'er aught that was bright in my story,
I knew it was love, and I felt it was glory.

November 6, 1821. [First published, 1830.]

STANZAS

TO A HINDOO AIR

[These verses were written by Lord Byron a little before he left Italy for Greece. They were meant to suit the Hindoostanee air of 'Alla Malla Punca,' which the Countess Guiccioli was fond of singing.]

Oh! — my lonely — lonely — lonely — Pillow!
Where is my lover, where is my lover?
Is it his bark which my dreary dreams discover?
Far — far away! and alone along the billow?

Oh! my lonely — lonely — lonely — Pillow!
Why must my head ache where his gentle brow lay?
How the long night flags lovelessly and slowly,
And my head droops over thee like the willow!

Oh! thou, my sad and solitary Pillow!
Send me kind dreams to keep my heart from breaking,
In return for the tears I shed upon thee waking;
Let me not die till he comes back o'er the billow.

Then if thou wilt — no more my *lonely* Pillow,
In one embrace let these arms again enfold him,
And then expire of the joy — but to behold him!
Oh! my lone bosom! — oh! my lonely Pillow!

[First published, 1832.]

TO ——

[In Lady Blessington's *Conversations with Lord Byron* these lines are thus introduced: 'I will give you some stanzas I wrote yesterday (said Byron); they are as simple as even Wordsworth himself could write, and would do for music.']

But once I dared to lift my eyes,
To lift my eyes to thee;
And, since that day, beneath the skies,
No other sight they see.

In vain sleep shuts them in the night,
The night grows day to me,
Presenting idly to my sight
What still a dream must be.

A fatal dream — for many a bar
Divides thy fate from mine;
And still my passions wake and war,
But peace be still with thine.

[First published, 1833.]

TO THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON

You have ask'd for a verse — the request,
In a rhymer, 't were strange to deny;
But my Hippocrene was but my breast,
And my feelings (its fountain) are dry.

Were I now as I was, I had sung
What Lawrence has pencill'd so well;
But the strain would expire on my tongue,
And the theme is too soft for my shell.

I am ashes where once I was fire,
And the bard in my bosom is dead;
What I loved I now merely admire,
And my heart is as grey as my head.

My life is not dated by years;
There are *moments* which act as a plough;
And there is not a furrow appears
But is deep in my soul as my brow.

Let the young and the brilliant aspire
To sing what I gaze on in vain;
For Sorrow has torn from my lyre
The string which was worthy the strain.
B.

[First published, 1830.]

ARISTOMENES

[First published in the Edition of 1901 from a manuscript in the possession of the Lady Dorchester.]

CANTO FIRST

I

The Gods of old are silent on their shore,
Since the great Pan expired, and through the roar
Of the Ionian waters broke a dread
Voice which proclaim'd 'the Mighty Pan is dead.'
How much died with him! false or true — the dream
Was beautiful which peopled every stream
With more than finny tenants, and adorn'd
The woods and waters with coy nymphs that scorn'd
Pursuing Deities, or in the embrace
Of gods brought forth the high heroic race
Whose names are on the hills and o'er the seas.

Cephalonia, *September* 10, 1823.

[LOVE AND DEATH]

[First published in *Murray's Magazine*, February, 1887.]

I watch'd thee when the foe was at our side,
Ready to strike at him — or thee and me,
Were safety hopeless — rather than divide
Aught with one loved save love and liberty

I watch'd thee on the breakers, when the rock
Received our prow and all was storm and fear,
And bade thee cling to me through every shock;
This arm would be thy bark, or breast thy bier.

I watch'd thee when the fever glazed thine eyes,
Yielding my couch and stretch'd me on the ground,
When overworn with watching, ne'er to rise
From thence if thou an early grave hadst found.

The earthquake came, and rock'd the quivering wall,
And men and nature reel'd as if with wine.
Whom did I seek around the tottering hall?
For thee. Whose safety first provide for? Thine.

And when convulsive throes denied my breath
The faintest utterance to my fading thought,
To thee — to thee — e'en in the gasp of death
My spirit turn'd, oh! oftener than it ought.

Thus much and more; and yet thou lov'st me not,
And never wilt! Love dwells not in our will.
Nor can I blame thee, though it be my lot
To strongly, wrongly, vainly love thee still.

LAST WORDS ON GREECE

[First published in *Murray's Magazine*, February, 1887.]

What are to me those honours or renown
Past or to come, a new-born people's cry?
Albeit for such I could despise a crown
Of aught save laurel, or for such could die.
I am a fool of passion, and a frown
Of thine to me is as an adder's eye.
To the poor bird whose pinion fluttering down
Wafts unto death the breast it bore so high;
Such is this maddening fascination grown,
So strong thy magic or so weak am I.

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

[Moore relates in the *Life* that on his last birthday Byron 'came from his bedroom into the apartment where Colonel Stanhope and some others were assembled and said with a smile, "You were complaining the other day that I never write any poetry now. This is my birthday, and I have just finished something which, I think, is better than what I usually write."' — The pathos and sincerity of the verses are echoed in Mangan's *The Nameless One*, though the spirit of the two poems is not the same.]

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze —
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

But 't is not *thus* — and 't is not *here* —
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor *now*,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece — she *is* awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through whom
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood! — unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regret'st thy youth, *why live?*
The land of honourable death
Is here: — up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

Seek out — less often sought than found —
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

Missolonghi, *January* 22, 1824.

DOMESTIC PIECES

[It is not necessary to say that these poems are concerned with the separation between Lord Byron and his wife. They are so distinct in character that it has seemed best to separate them from among the other Miscellaneous Poems.]

FARE THEE WELL

[Moore relates on the authority of Byron's *Memoranda* that these stanzas were written 'under the swell of tender recollections' as the poet 'sat one night musing in the study . . . the tears falling fast over the paper as he wrote them.' Mr. Coleridge avers that there are no tear-marks on the original draft of the poem. 'T is pity.]

> 'Alas! they had been friends in Youth;
> But whispering tongues can poison truth:
> And constancy lives in realms above;
> And Life is thorny; and youth is vain;
> And to be wroth with one we love,
> Doth work like madness in the brain;
>
> . . . .
>
> But never either found another
> To free the hollow heart from paining —
> They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
> Like cliffs, which had been rent asunder;
> A dreary sea now flows between,
> But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
> Shall wholly do away, I ween,
> The marks of that which once hath been.'
>
> Coleridge's *Christabel.*

Fare thee well! and if for ever,
Still for ever, fare *thee well:*
Even though unforgiving, never
'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.

Would that breast were bared before thee
Where thy head so oft hath lain,
While that placid sleep came o'er thee
Which thou ne'er canst know again:

Would that breast, by thee glanced over,
Every inmost thought could show!
Then thou wouldst at last discover
'T was not well to spurn it so.

Though the world for this commend thee —
Though it smile upon the blow,
Even its praises must offend thee,
Founded on another's woe:

Though my many faults defaced me,
Could no other arm be found,
Than the one which once embraced me,
To inflict a cureless wound?

Yet, oh yet, thyself deceive not;
Love may sink by slow decay,
But by sudden wrench, believe not
Hearts can thus be torn away:

Still thine own its life retaineth —
Still must mine, though bleeding, beat;
And the undying thought which paineth
Is — that we no more may meet.

These are words of deeper sorrow
Than the wail above the dead;
Both shall live, but every morrow
Wake us from a widow'd bed.

And when thou wouldst solace gather,
When our child's first accents flow,
Wilt thou teach her to say 'Father!'
Though his care she must forego?

When her little hands shall press thee,
When her lip to thine is press'd,
Think of him whose prayer shall bless thee,
Think of him thy love had bless'd!

Should her lineaments resemble
Those thou nevermore may'st see,
Then thy heart will softly tremble
With a pulse yet true to me.

All my faults perchance thou knowest,
All my madness none can know;
All my hopes, where'er thou goest,
Wither, yet with *thee* they go.

Every feeling hath been shaken;
Pride, which not a world could bow,
Bows to thee — by thee forsaken,
Even my soul forsakes me now:

But 't is done — all words are idle —
Words from me are vainer still;
But the thoughts we cannot bridle
Force their way without the will.

Fare thee well! — thus disunited,
Torn from every nearer tie,
Sear'd in heart, and lone, and blighted,
More than this I scarce can die.

March 18, 1816.

A SKETCH

'Honest — honest Iago!
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.'
SHAKSPEARE.

Born in the garret, in the kitchen bred,
Promoted thence to deck her mistress' head;
Next — for some gracious service unexpress'd,
And from its wages only to be guess'd —
Raised from the toilet to the table, — where
Her wondering betters wait behind her chair, —
With eye unmoved, and forehead unabash'd,
She dines from off the plate she lately wash'd.
Quick with the tale, and ready with the lie —
The genial confidante, and general spy —
Who could, ye gods! her next employment guess —
An only infant's earliest governess!
She taught the child to read, and taught so well,
That she herself, by teaching, learn'd to spell.
An adept next in penmanship she grows,
As many a nameless slander deftly shows:
What she had made the pupil of her art,
None know — but that high Soul secured the heart,
And panted for the truth it could not hear,
With longing breast and undeluded ear.
Foil'd was perversion by that youthful mind,
Which Flattery fool'd not, Baseness could not blind,
Deceit infect not, near Contagion soil —
Indulgence weaken, nor Example spoil —
Nor master'd Science tempt her to look down
On humbler talents with a pitying frown,
Nor Genius swell, nor Beauty render vain,
Nor Envy ruffle to retaliate pain,
Nor Fortune change, Pride raise, nor Passion bow,
Nor Virtue teach austerity — till now.
Serenely purest of her sex that live,
But wanting one sweet weakness — to forgive,
Too shock'd at faults her soul can never know,
She deems that all could be like her below:
Foe to all vice, yet hardly Virtue's friend,
For Virtue pardons those she would amend.

But to the theme: — now laid aside too long,
The baleful burthen of this honest song —
Though all her former functions are no more,
She rules the circle which she served before.
If mothers — none know why — before her quake;
If daughters dread her for the mothers' sake;
If early habits — those false links, which bind
At times the loftiest to the meanest mind —
Have given her power too deeply to instil
The angry essence of her deadly will;
If like a snake she steal within your walls,
Till the black slime betray her as she crawls;
If like a viper to the heart she wind,
And leave the venom there she did not find;
What marvel that this hag of hatred works
Eternal evil latent as she lurks,
To make a Pandemonium where she dwells,
And reign the Hecate of domestic hells?
Skill'd by a touch to deepen scandal's tints
With all the kind mendacity of hints,

While mingling truth with falsehood — sneers with smiles —
A thread of candour with a web of wiles;
A plain blunt show of briefly-spoken seeming,
To hide her bloodless heart's soul-harden'd scheming;
A lip of lies; a face form'd to conceal,
And, without feeling, mock at all who feel;
With a vile mask the Gorgon would disown, —
A cheek of parchment, and an eye of stone.
Mark, how the channels of her yellow blood
Ooze to her skin, and stagnate there to mud,
Cased like the centipede in saffron mail,
Or darker greenness of the scorpion's scale
(For drawn from reptiles only may we trace
Congenial colours in that soul or face) —
Look on her features ! and behold her mind
As in a mirror of itself defined:
Look on the picture ! deem it not o'ercharged —
There is no trait which might not be enlarged:
Yet true to 'Nature's journeymen,' who made
This monster when their mistress left off trade —
This female dog-star of her little sky,
Where all beneath her influence droop or die.

Oh ! wretch without a tear, without a thought,
Save joy above the ruin thou hast wrought —
The time shall come, nor long remote, when thou
Shalt feel far more than thou inflictest now;
Feel for thy vile self-loving self in vain,
And turn thee howling in unpitied pain.
May the strong curse of crush'd affections light
Back on thy bosom with reflected blight !
And make thee, in thy leprosy of mind,
As loathsome to thyself as to mankind !
Till all thy self-thoughts curdle into hate,
Black — as thy will for others would create:
Till thy hard heart be calcined into dust,
And thy soul welter in its hideous crust.
Oh, may thy grave be sleepless as the bed, —
The widow'd couch of fire, that thou hast spread !
Then, when thou fain wouldst weary Heaven with prayer,
Look on thine earthly victims — and despair !
Down to the dust ! — and, as thou rott'st away,
Even worms shall perish on thy poisonous clay.
But for the love I bore, and still must bear,
To her thy malice from all ties would tear —
Thy name — thy human name — to every eye
The climax of all scorn should hang on high,
Exalted o'er thy less abhorr'd compeers —
And festering in the infamy of years.

March 29, 1816.

STANZAS TO AUGUSTA

[These stanzas to his sister, Mrs. Leigh, were the last written before his final departure from England.]

When all around grew drear and dark,
  And reason half withheld her ray —
And hope but shed a dying spark
  Which more misled my lonely way;

In that deep midnight of the mind,
  And that internal strife of heart,
When, dreading to be deem'd too kind,
  The weak despair — the cold depart;

When fortune changed — and love fled far,
  And hatred's shafts flew thick and fast,
Thou wert the solitary star
  Which rose and set not to the last.

Oh ! blest be thine unbroken light,
  That watch'd me as a seraph's eye,
And stood between me and the night,
  For ever shining sweetly nigh.

And when the cloud upon us came,
  Which strove to blacken o'er thy ray —
Then purer spread its gentle flame,
  And dash'd the darkness all away.

Still may thy spirit dwell on mine,
  And teach it what to brave or brook —
There 's more in one soft word of thine
  Than in the world's defied rebuke

Thou stood'st, as stands a lovely tree,
That still unbroke, though gently bent,
Still waves with fond fidelity
Its boughs above a monument.

The winds might rend, the skies might pour,
But there thou wert — and still wouldst be
Devoted in the stormiest hour
To shed thy weeping leaves o'er me.

But thou and thine shall know no blight,
Whatever fate on me may fall;
For Heaven in sunshine will requite
The kind — and thee the most of all.

Then let the ties of baffled love
Be broken — thine will never break;
Thy heart can feel — but will not move;
Thy soul, though soft, will never shake.

And these, when all was lost beside,
Were found and still are fix'd in thee; —
And bearing still a breast so tried,
Earth is no desert — ev'n to me.

[First published, 1816.]

STANZAS TO AUGUSTA

[These stanzas were written at the Campagne Diodati, near Geneva, and transmitted to England for publication, with some other pieces. 'Be careful,' he says (Letter to Murray, October 5, 1816), 'in printing the stanzas beginning, "Though the day of my destiny 's," etc., which I think well of as a composition.' — Byron often erred in judging his own work, but in this case his judgment was right. It will be remembered that Poe, in his *Essay on Poetry*, particularly commends the sentiment and versification of this poem.]

Though the day of my destiny 's over,
And the star of my fate hath declined,
Thy soft heart refused to discover
The faults which so many could find;
Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,
It shrunk not to share it with me,
And the love which my spirit hath painted
It never hath found but in *thee*.

Then when nature around me is smiling,
The last smile which answers to mine,
I do not believe it beguiling,
Because it reminds me of thine;
And when winds are at war with the ocean,
As the breasts I believed in with me,
If their billows excite an emotion,
It is that they bear me from *thee*.

Though the rock of my last hope is shiver'd,
And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
Though I feel that my soul is deliver'd
To pain — it shall not be its slave.
There is many a pang to pursue me:
They may crush, but they shall not contemn —
They may torture, but shall not subdue me —
'T is of *thee* that I think — not of them.

Though human, thou didst not deceive me,
Though woman, thou didst not forsake,
Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me,
Though slander'd, thou never couldst shake, —
Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me,
Though parted, it was not to fly,
Though watchful, 't was not to defame me,
Nor, mute, that the world might belie.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
Nor the war of the many with one —
If my soul was not fitted to prize it,
'T was folly not sooner to shun:
And if dearly that error hath cost me,
And more than I once could foresee,
I have found that, whatever it lost me,
It could not deprive me of *thee*.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perish'd,
Thus much I at least may recall,
It hath taught me that what I most cherish'd
Deserved to be dearest of all:
In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wide waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*.

July 24, 1816.

EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA

[These stanzas, like the preceding, were composed at Diodati, and were sent home to be printed if Mrs. Leigh should consent. In accordance with her wish they were withheld from publication until 1830, when they appeared in his *Letters and Journals*. The *Quarterly Review* for January, 1831, declares of this poem that 'there is, perhaps, nothing more mournfully and desolately beautiful in the whole range of Lord Byron's poetry.' Certainly there is no single short poem which throws more light on the poet's genius and character.]

My sister! my sweet sister! if a name
Dearer and purer were, it should be thine.
Mountains and seas divide us, but I claim
No tears, but tenderness to answer mine:
Go where I will, to me thou art the same —
A loved regret which I would not resign.
There yet are two things in my destiny, —
A world to roam through, and a home with thee.

The first were nothing — had I still the last,
It were the haven of my happiness;
But other claims and other ties thou hast,
And mine is not the wish to make them less.
A strange doom is thy father's son's, and past
Recalling, as it lies beyond redress;
Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of yore, —
He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore.

If my inheritance of storms hath been
In other elements, and on the rocks
Of perils, overlook'd or unforeseen,
I have sustain'd my share of worldly shocks,
The fault was mine; nor do I seek to screen
My errors with defensive paradox;
I have been cunning in mine overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe.

Mine were my faults, and mine be their reward.
My whole life was a contest, since the day
That gave me being, gave me that which marr'd
The gift, — a fate, or will, that walk'd astray;
And I at times have found the struggle hard,
And thought of shaking off my bonds of clay:
But now I fain would for a time survive,
If but to see what next can well arrive.

Kingdoms and empires in my little day
I have outlived, and yet I am not old;
And when I look on this, the petty spray
Of my own years of trouble, which have roll'd
Like a wild bay of breakers, melts away:
Something — I know not what — does still uphold
A spirit of slight patience; — not in vain,
Even for its own sake, do we purchase pain.

Perhaps the workings of defiance stir
Within me, — or perhaps a cold despair,
Brought on when ills habitually recur,
Perhaps a kinder clime, or purer air
(For even to this may change of soul refer,
And with light armour we may learn to bear),
Have taught me a strange quiet, which was not
The chief companion of a calmer lot.

I feel almost at times as I have felt
In happy childhood; trees, and flowers, and brooks,
Which do remember me of where I dwelt
Ere my young mind was sacrificed to books,
Come as of yore upon me, and can melt
My heart with recognition of their looks;
And even at moments I could think I see
Some living thing to love — but none like thee.

Here are the Alpine landscapes which create
A fund for contemplation; — to admire
Is a brief feeling of a trivial date;
But something worthier do such scenes inspire:
Here to be lonely is not desolate,
For much I view which I could most desire,
And, above all, a lake I can behold
Lovelier, not dearer, than our own of old.

Oh that thou wert but with me! — but I grow
The fool of my own wishes, and forget
The solitude, which I have vaunted so,
Has lost its praise in this but one regret;

There may be others which I less may show; —
I am not of the plaintive mood, and yet
I feel an ebb in my philosophy,
And the tide rising in my alter'd eye.

I did remind thee of our own dear Lake,
By the old Hall which may be mine no more.
Leman's is fair; but think not I forsake
The sweet remembrance of a dearer shore:
Sad havoc Time must with my memory make
Ere *that* or *thou* can fade these eyes before;
Though, like all things which I have loved, they are
Resign'd for ever, or divided far.

The world is all before me; I but ask
Of Nature that with which she will comply —
It is but in her summer's sun to bask,
To mingle with the quiet of her sky,
To see her gentle face without a mask,
And never gaze on it with apathy.
She was my early friend, and now shall be
My sister — till I look again on thee.

I can reduce all feelings but this one,
And that I would not; — for at length I see
Such scenes as those wherein my life begun,
The earliest — even the only paths for me:
Had I but sooner learnt the crowd to shun,
I had been better than I now can be;
The passions which have torn me would have slept;
I had not suffer'd, and *thou* hadst not wept.

With false Ambition what had I to do?
Little with Love, and least of all with Fame;
And yet they came unsought, and with me grew,
And made me all which they can make — a name.
Yet this was not the end I did pursue;
Surely I once beheld a nobler aim.
But all is over — I am one the more
To baffled millions which have gone before.

And for the future, this world's future may
From me demand but little of my care;
I have outlived myself by many a day;
Having survived so many things that were;
My years have been no slumber, but the prey
Of ceaseless vigils; for I had the share
Of life which might have fill'd a century,
Before its fourth in time had pass'd me by.

And for the remnant which may be to come,
I am content; and for the past I feel
Not thankless, — for within the crowded sum
Of struggles, happiness at times would steal;
And for the present, I would not benumb
My feelings farther. — Nor shall I conceal
That with all this I still can look around,
And worship Nature with a thought profound.

For thee, my own sweet sister, in thy heart
I know myself secure, as thou in mine;
We were and are — I am, even as thou art —
Beings who ne'er each other can resign;
It is the same, together or apart,
From life's commencement to its slow decline
We are entwined — let death come slow or fast,
The tie which bound the first endures the last!

[First published, 1830.]

LINES

ON HEARING THAT LADY BYRON WAS ILL

[These verses were written after a futile attempt at reconciliation with Lady Byron through Madame de Staël's agency, and were not intended for publication.]

And thou wert sad — yet I was not with thee;
And thou wert sick, and yet I was not near;

Methought that joy and health alone could be
Where I was not — and pain and sorrow here!
And is it thus? — it is as I foretold,
And shall be more so; for the mind recoils
Upon itself, and the wreck'd heart lies cold,
While heaviness collects the shatter'd spoils.
It is not in the storm nor in the strife
We feel benumb'd and wish to be no more,
But in the after-silence on the shore,
When all is lost except a little life.

I am too well avenged! — but 't was my right;
Whate'er my sins might be, *thou* wert not sent
To be the Nemesis who should requite —
Nor did Heaven choose so near an instrument.
Mercy is for the merciful — if thou
Hast been of such, 't will be accorded now.
Thy nights are banish'd from the realms of sleep! —
Yes! they may flatter thee, but thou shalt feel
A hollow agony which will not heal,
For thou art pillow'd on a curse too deep;
Thou hast sown in my sorrow, and must reap
The bitter harvest in a woe as real!
I have had many foes, but none like thee;
For 'gainst the rest myself I could defend,
And be avenged, or turn them into friend;
But thou in safe implacability
Hadst nought to dread — in thy own weakness shielded,
And in my love, which hath but too much yielded,
And spared, for thy sake, some I should not spare;
And thus upon the world, trust in thy truth,
And the wild fame of my ungovern'd youth,
On things that were not, and on things that are, —
Even upon such a basis hast thou built
A monument, whose cement hath been guilt
(The moral Clytemnestra of thy lord!);
And hew'd down, with an unsuspected sword,
Fame, peace, and hope — and all the better life
Which, but for this cold treason of thy heart,
Might still have risen from out the grave of strife,
And found a nobler duty than to part.
But of thy virtues didst thou make a vice,
Trafficking with them in a purpose cold,
For present anger and for future gold —
And buying other's grief at any price.
And thus once enter'd into crooked ways,
The early truth, which was thy proper praise,
Did not still walk beside thee — but at times,
And with a breast unknowing its own crimes,
Deceit, averments incompatible,
Equivocations, and the thoughts which dwell
In Janus-spirits — the significant eye
Which learns to lie with silence — the pretext
Of Prudence, with advantages annex'd —
The acquiescence in all things which tend,
No matter how, to the desirèd end —
All found a place in thy philosophy.
The means were worthy, and the end is won —
I would not do by thee as thou hast done!

September, 1816. [First published, 1832.]

THE DREAM

I

Our life is twofold: Sleep hath its own world,
A boundary between the things misnamed
Death and existence: Sleep hath its own world,
And a wide realm of wild reality,
And dreams in their development have breath,
And tears, and tortures, and the touch of joy;
They leave a weight upon our waking thoughts,
They take a weight from off our waking toils,
They do divide our being; they become
A portion of ourselves as of our time,
And look like heralds of eternity;
They pass like spirits of the past. — they speak

Like sibyls of the future; they have power —
The tyranny of pleasure and of pain;
They make us what we were not — what they will,
And shake us with the vision that 's gone by,
The dread of vanish'd shadows — Are they so?
Is not the past all shadow? What are they?
Creations of the mind? — The mind can make
Substance, and people planets of its own
With beings brighter than have been, and give
A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh.
I would recall a vision which I dream'd
Perchance in sleep — for in itself a thought,
A slumbering thought, is capable of years,
And curdles a long life into one hour.

II

I saw two beings in the hues of youth
Standing upon a hill, a gentle hill,
Green and of mild declivity, the last
As 't were the cape of a long ridge of such,
Save that there was no sea to lave its base,
But a most living landscape, and the wave
Of woods and cornfields, and the abodes of men
Scatter'd at intervals, and wreathing smoke
Arising from such rustic roofs; — the hill
Was crown'd with a peculiar diadem
Of trees, in circular array, so fix'd,
Not by the sport of nature, but of man.
These two, a maiden and a youth, were there
Gazing — the one on all that was beneath
Fair as herself — but the boy gazed on her;
And both were young, and one was beautiful:
And both were young — yet not alike in youth.
As the sweet moon on the horizon's verge,
The maid was on the eve of womanhood;
The boy had fewer summers, but his heart
Had far outgrown his years, and to his eye
There was but one belovèd face on earth,
And that was shining on him; he had look'd
Upon it till it could not pass away;
He had no breath, no being, but in hers:
She was his voice; he did not speak to her,
But trembled on her words: she was his sight,
For his eye follow'd hers, and saw with hers,
Which colour'd all his objects: — he had ceased
To live within himself; she was his life,
The ocean to the river of his thoughts,
Which terminated all: upon a tone,
A touch of hers, his blood would ebb and flow
And his cheek change tempestuously — his heart
Unknowing of its cause of agony.
But she in these fond feelings had no share:
Her sighs were not for him; to her he was
Even as a brother — but no more; 't was much,
For brotherless she was, save in the name
Her infant friendship had bestow'd on him;
Herself the solitary scion left
Of a time-honour'd race. — It was a name
Which pleased him, and yet pleased him not — and why?
Time taught him a deep answer — when she loved
Another; even *now* she loved another,
And on the summit of that hill she stood
Looking afar if yet her lover's steed
Kept pace with her expectancy, and flew.

III

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
There was an ancient mansion, and before
Its walls there was a steed caparison'd:
Within an antique Oratory stood
The Boy of whom I spake; — he was alone,
And pale, and pacing to and fro: anon
He sate him down, and seized a pen, and traced
Words which I could not guess of; then he lean'd
His bow'd head on his hands, and shook as 't were
With a convulsion — then arose again,
And with his teeth and quivering hands did tear
What he had written, but he shed no tears.
And he did calm himself, and fix his brow
Into a kind of quiet: as he paused,
The Lady of his love re-enter'd there;
She was serene and smiling then, and yet
She knew she was by him beloved, — she knew,
For quickly comes such knowledge, that his heart
Was darken'd with her shadow, and she saw
That he was wretched, but she saw not all.
He rose, and with a cold and gentle grasp
He took her hand; a moment o'er his face
A tablet of unutterable thoughts

Was traced, and then it faded, as it came.
He dropp'd the hand he held, and with slow steps
Retired, but not as bidding her adieu,
For they did part with mutual smiles; he pass'd
From out the massy gate of that old Hall,
And mounting on his steed he went his way;
And ne'er repass'd that hoary threshold more.

IV

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Boy was sprung to manhood: in the wilds
Of fiery climes he made himself a home,
And his Soul drank their sunbeams: he was girt
With strange and dusky aspects; he was not
Himself like what he had been; on the sea
And on the shore he was a wanderer;
There was a mass of many images
Crowded like waves upon me, but he was
A part of all; and in the last he lay
Reposing from the noontide sultriness,
Couch'd among fallen columns, in the shade
Of ruin'd walls that had survived the names
Of those who rear'd them; by his sleeping side
Stood camels grazing, and some goodly steeds
Were fasten'd near a fountain; and a man
Clad in a flowing garb did watch the while,
While many of his tribe slumber'd around:
And they were canopied by the blue sky,
So cloudless, clear, and purely beautiful,
That God alone was to be seen in Heaven.

V

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Lady of his love was wed with One
Who did not love her better: — in her home,
A thousand leagues from his, — her native home,
She dwelt, begirt with growing Infancy,
Daughters and sons of Beauty, — but behold!
Upon her face there was the tint of grief,
The settled shadow of an inward strife,
And an unquiet drooping of the eye,
As if its lid were charged with unshed tears.
What could her grief be? — she had all she loved,
And he who had so loved her was not there
To trouble with bad hopes, or evil wish,
Or ill-repress'd affliction, her pure thoughts.
What could her grief be? — she had loved him not,
Nor given him cause to deem himself beloved,
Nor could he be a part of that which prey'd
Upon her mind — a spectre of the past.

VI

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Wanderer was return'd. — I saw him stand
Before an Altar — with a gentle bride;
Her face was fair, but was not that which made
The Starlight of his Boyhood; — as he stood
Even at the altar, o'er his brow there came
The selfsame aspect, and the quivering shock
That in the antique Oratory shook
His bosom in its solitude; and then —
As in that hour — a moment o'er his face
The tablet of unutterable thoughts
Was traced — and then it faded as it came,
And he stood calm and quiet, and he spoke
The fitting vows, but heard not his own words,
And all things reel'd around him; he could see
Not that which was, nor that which should have been —
But the old mansion, and the accustom'd hall,
And the remember'd chambers, and the place,
The day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade,
All things pertaining to that place and hour,
And her who was his destiny, came back
And thrust themselves between him and the light:
What business had they there at such a time?

VII

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Lady of his love; — Oh! she was changed,
As by the sickness of the soul; her mind
Had wander'd from its dwelling, and her eyes
They had not their own lustre, but the look
Which is not of the earth; she was become

The queen of a fantastic realm; her thoughts
Were combinations of disjointed things;
And forms, impalpable and unperceived
Of others' sight, familiar were to hers.
And this the world calls frenzy; but the wise
Have a far deeper madness, and the glance
Of melancholy is a fearful gift:
What is it but the telescope of truth,
Which strips the distance of its fantasies,
And brings life near in utter nakedness,
Making the cold reality too real?

VIII

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Wanderer was alone as heretofore,
The beings which surrounded him were gone,
Or were at war with him; he was a mark
For blight and desolation, compass'd round
With Hatred and Contention; Pain was mix'd
In all which was served up to him, until,
Like to the Pontic monarch of old days,
He fed on poisons, and they had no power,
But were a kind of nutriment; he lived
Through that which had been death to many men,
And made him friends of mountains: with the stars
And the quick Spirit of the Universe
He held his dialogues; and they did teach
To him the magic of their mysteries;
To him the book of Night was open'd wide,
And voices from the deep abyss reveal'd
A marvel and a secret — Be it so.

IX

My dream was past; it had no further change.
It was of a strange order, that the doom
Of these two creatures should be thus traced out
Almost like a reality — the one
To end in madness — both in misery.

July, 1816.

HEBREW MELODIES

ADVERTISEMENT

The subsequent poems were written at the request of my friend, the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird, for a Selection of Hebrew Melodies, and have been published, with the music, arranged by Mr. Braham and Mr. Nathan.

January, 1815.

'SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY'

[These stanzas were written on returning from a ball-room, where he had seen Lady Wilmot Horton, who appeared in mourning with numerous spangles on her dress.]

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that 's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

June 12, 1814.

'THE HARP THE MONARCH MINSTREL SWEPT'

The harp the monarch minstrel swept,
The King of men, the loved of Heaven,
Which Music hallow'd while she wept
O'er tones her heart of hearts had given, —
Redoubled be her tears, its chords are riven!
It soften'd men of iron mould,
It gave them virtues not their own;
No ear so dull, no soul so cold,
That felt not, fired not to the tone,
Till David's lyre grew mightier than his throne!

It told the triumphs of our King,
It wafted glory to our God;
It made our gladden'd valleys ring,
The cedars bow, the mountains nod;
Its sound aspired to Heaven and there abode !
Since then, though heard on earth no more,
Devotion and her daughter Love
Still bid the bursting spirit soar
To sounds that seem as from above,
In dreams that day's broad light can not remove.

'IF THAT HIGH WORLD'

If that high world, which lies beyond
Our own, surviving Love endears;
If there the cherish'd heart be fond,
The eye the same, except in tears —
How welcome those untrodden spheres !
How sweet this very hour to die !
To soar from earth, and find all fears
Lost in thy light — Eternity !

It must be so: 't is not for self
That we so tremble on the brink;
And, striving to o'erleap the gulf,
Yet cling to Being's severing link.
Oh ! in that future let us think
To hold each heart the heart that shares;
With them the immortal waters drink,
And soul in soul grow deathless theirs !

'THE WILD GAZELLE'

The wild gazelle on Judah's hills
Exulting yet may bound,
And drink from all the living rills
That gush on holy ground;
Its airy step and glorious eye
May glance in tameless transport by.

A step as fleet, an eye more bright,
Hath Judah witness'd there;
And o'er her scenes of lost delight
Inhabitants more fair.
The cedars wave on Lebanon,
But Judah's statelier maids are gone !

More blest each palm that shades those plains
Than Israel's scatter'd race;
For, taking root, it there remains
In solitary grace:
It cannot quit its place of birth,
It will not live in other earth.

But we must wander witheringly,
In other lands to die;
And where our fathers' ashes be,
Our own may never lie;
Our temple hath not left a stone,
And Mockery sits on Salem's throne.

'OH! WEEP FOR THOSE

Oh ! weep for those that wept by Babel's stream,
Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a dream;
Weep for the harp of Judah's broken shell;
Mourn — where their God hath dwelt, the godless dwell !

And where shall Israel lave her bleeding feet ?
And when shall Zion's songs again seem sweet ?
And Judah's melody once more rejoice
The hearts that leap'd before its heavenly voice ?

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
How shall ye flee away and be at rest !
The wild-dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country — Israel but the grave !

'ON JORDAN'S BANKS'

On Jordan's banks the Arab's camels stray,
On Sion's hill the False One's votaries pray,
The Baal-adorer bows on Sinai's steep —
Yet there — even there — Oh God ! thy thunders sleep:

There — where thy finger scorch'd the tablet stone !
There — where thy shadow to thy people shone,
Thy glory shrouded in its garb of fire:
Thyself — none living see and not expire !

Oh! in the lightning let thy glance appear;
Sweep from his shiver'd hand the oppressor's spear:
How long by tyrants shall thy land be trod!
How long thy temple worshipless, O God!

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

Since our Country, our God — Oh, my Sire!
Demand that thy daughter expire;
Since thy triumph was bought by thy vow —
Strike the bosom that 's bared for thee now!

And the voice of my mourning is o'er,
And the mountains behold me no more:
If the hand that I love lay me low,
There cannot be pain in the blow!

And of this, oh, my Father! be sure —
That the blood of thy child is as pure
As the blessing I beg ere it flow,
And the last thought that soothes me below.

Though the virgins of Salem lament,
Be the judge and the hero unbent!
I have won the great battle for thee,
And my Father and Country are free!

When this blood of thy giving hath gush'd,
When the voice that thou lovest is hush'd,
Let my memory still be thy pride,
And forget not I smiled as I died!

'OH! SNATCH'D AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM'

Oh! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom,
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;
But on thy turf shall roses rear
Their leaves, the earliest of the year;
And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom:

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
And feed deep thought with many a dream,
And lingering pause and lightly tread;
Fond wretch! as if her step disturb'd the dead!

Away! we know that tears are vain,
That death nor heeds nor hears distress:
Will this unteach us to complain?
Or make one mourner weep the less?
And thou — who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

'MY SOUL IS DARK'

My soul is dark — Oh! quickly string
The harp I yet can brook to hear;
And let thy gentle fingers fling
Its melting murmurs o'er mine ear.
If in this heart a hope be dear,
That sound shall charm it forth again:
If in these eyes there lurk a tear,
'T will flow, and cease to burn my brain.

But bid the strain be wild and deep,
Nor let thy notes of joy be first:
I tell thee, minstrel, I must weep,
Or else this heavy heart will burst;
For it hath been by sorrow nursed,
And ached in sleepless silence long;
And now 't is doom'd to know the worst,
And break at once — or yield to song.

'I SAW THEE WEEP'

I saw thee weep — the big bright tear
Came o'er that eye of blue;
And then methought it did appear
A violet dropping dew:
I saw thee smile — the sapphire's blaze
Beside thee ceased to shine;
It could not match the living rays
That fill'd that glance of thine.

As clouds from yonder sun receive
A deep and mellow dye,
Which scarce the shade of coming eve
Can banish from the sky,
Those smiles unto the moodiest mind
Their own pure joy impart;
Their sunshine leaves a glow behind
That lightens o'er the heart.

'THY DAYS ARE DONE'

Thy days are done, thy fame begun;
Thy country's strains record
The triumphs of her chosen Son,
The slaughters of his sword!
The deeds he did, the fields he won,
The freedom he restored!

Though thou art fall'n, while we are free
Thou shalt not taste of death!
The generous blood that flow'd from thee
Disdain'd to sink beneath:
Within our veins its currents be,
Thy spirit on our breath!

Thy name, our charging hosts along,
Shall be the battle-word!
Thy fall, the theme of choral song
From virgin voices pour'd!
To weep would do thy glory wrong;
Thou shalt not be deplored.

SONG OF SAUL BEFORE HIS LAST BATTLE

WARRIORS and chiefs! should the shaft or the sword
Pierce me in leading the host of the Lord,
Heed not the corse, though a king's, in your path:
Bury your steel in the bosoms of Gath!

Thou who art bearing my buckler and bow,
Should the soldiers of Saul look away from the foe,
Stretch me that moment in blood at thy feet!
Mine be the doom which they dared not to meet.

Farewell to others, but never we part,
Heir to my royalty, son of my heart!
Bright is the diadem, boundless the sway,
Or kingly the death, which awaits us to-day!

SEAHAM, 1815.

SAUL

THOU whose spell can raise the dead,
Bid the prophet's form appear.—
'Samuel, raise thy buried head!
King, behold the phantom seer!'—
Earth yawn'd; he stood the centre of a cloud:
Light changed its hue, retiring from his shroud.
Death stood all glassy in his fixèd eye;
His hand was wither'd, and his veins were dry;
His foot, in bony whiteness, glitter'd there,
Shrunken and sinewless, and ghastly bare;
From lips that moved not and unbreathing frame,
Like cavern'd winds, the hollow accents came.
Saul saw, and fell to earth, as falls the oak,
At once, and blasted by the thunder-stroke.

'Why is my sleep disquieted?
Who is he that calls the dead?
Is it thou, O King? Behold,
Bloodless are these limbs, and cold:
Such are mine; and such shall be
Thine to-morrow, when with me:
Ere the coming day is done,
Such shalt thou be, such thy son.
Fare thee well, but for a day,
Then we mix our mouldering clay.
Thou, thy race, lie pale and low,
Pierced by shafts of many a bow;
And the falchion by thy side
To thy heart thy hand shall guide:
Crownless, breathless, headless fall,
Son and sire, the house of Saul!'

SEAHAM, *February*, 1815.

'ALL IS VANITY, SAITH THE PREACHER'

FAME, wisdom, love, and power were mine,
And health and youth possess'd me;
My goblets blush'd from every vine,
And lovely forms caress'd me;
I sunn'd my heart in beauty's eyes,
And felt my soul grow tender;
All earth can give, or mortal prize,
Was mine of regal splendour.

I strive to number o'er what days
Remembrance can discover,
Which all that life or earth displays
Would lure me to live over.
There rose no day, there roll'd no hour
Of pleasure unembitter'd;
And not a trapping deck'd my power
That gall'd not while it glitter'd.

The serpent of the field, by art
And spells, is won from harming;
But that which coils around the heart,
Oh! who hath power of charming?
It will not list to wisdom's lore,
Nor music's voice can lure it;
But there it stings for evermore
The soul that must endure it.

SEAHAM, 1815.

'WHEN COLDNESS WRAPS THIS SUFFERING CLAY'

When coldness wraps this suffering clay,
Ah! whither strays the immortal mind?
It cannot die, it cannot stay,
But leaves its darken'd dust behind.
Then, unembodied, doth it trace
By steps each planet's heavenly way?
Or fill at once the realms of space,
A thing of eyes, that all survey?

Eternal, boundless, undecay'd,
A thought unseen, but seeing all,
All, all in earth, or skies display'd,
Shall it survey, shall it recall:
Each fainter trace that memory holds
So darkly of departed years,
In one broad glance the soul beholds,
And all, that was, at once appears.

Before Creation peopled earth,
Its eye shall roll through chaos back;
And where the furthest heaven had birth,
The spirit trace its rising track.
And where the future mars or makes,
Its glance dilate o'er all to be,
While sun is quench'd or system breaks,
Fix'd in its own eternity.

Above or Love, Hope, Hate, or Fear,
It lives all passionless and pure:
An age shall fleet like earthly year,
Its years as moments shall endure.
Away, away, without a wing,
O'er all, through all, its thought shall fly;
A nameless and eternal thing,
Forgetting what it was to die.

Seaham, 1815.

VISION OF BELSHAZZAR

The King was on his throne,
The Satraps throng'd the hall;
A thousand bright lamps shone
O'er that high festival.
A thousand cups of gold,
In Judah deem'd divine —
Jehovah's vessels hold
The godless Heathen's wine!

In that same hour and hall,
The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
And wrote as if on sand:
The fingers of a man; —
A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
And traced them like a wand.

The monarch saw, and shook,
And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless wax'd his look,
And tremulous his voice.
'Let the men of lore appear,
The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of fear,
Which mar our royal mirth.'

Chaldea's seers are good,
But here they have no skill;
And the unknown letters stood
Untold and awful still.
And Babel's men of age
Are wise and deep in lore;
But now they were not sage,
They saw — but knew no more.

A captive in the land,
A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
He saw that writing's truth.
The lamps around were bright,
The prophecy in view;
He read it on that night, —
The morrow proved it true.

'Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom pass'd away,
He, in the balance weigh'd,
Is light and worthless clay;
The shroud, his robe of state,
His canopy the stone:
The Mede is at his gate!
The Persian on his throne!'

'SUN OF THE SLEEPLESS'

Sun of the sleepless! melancholy star!
Whose tearful beam glows tremulously far,
That show'st the darkness thou canst not dispel,
How like art thou to joy remember'd well!
So gleams the past, the light of other days,
Which shines, but warms not with its powerless rays;
A night-beam Sorrow watcheth to behold,
Distinct, but distant — clear — but, oh how cold!

'WERE MY BOSOM AS FALSE AS THOU DEEM'ST IT TO BE'

Were my bosom as false as thou deem'st it to be,
I need not have wander'd from far Galilee;
It was but abjuring my creed to efface
The curse which, thou say'st, is the crime of my race.

If the bad never triumph, then God is with thee!
If the slave only sin, thou art spotless and free!
If the Exile on earth is an Outcast on high,
Live on in thy faith, but in mine I will die.

I have lost for that faith more than thou canst bestow,
As the God who permits thee to prosper doth know;
In his hand is my heart and my hope — and in thine
The land and the life which for him I resign.

Seaham, 1815.

HEROD'S LAMENT FOR MARIAMNE

Oh, Mariamne! now for thee
The heart for which thou bled'st is bleeding;
Revenge is lost in agony,
And wild remorse to rage succeeding.
Oh, Mariamne! where art thou?
Thou canst not hear my bitter pleading:
Ah! couldst thou — thou wouldst pardon now,
Though Heaven were to my prayer unheeding.

And is she dead? — and did they dare
Obey my frenzy's jealous raving?
My wrath but doom'd my own despair:
The sword that smote her 's o'er me waving. —
But thou art cold, my murder'd love!
And this dark heart is vainly craving
For her who soars alone above,
And leaves my soul unworthy saving.

She 's gone, who shared my diadem;
She sunk, with her my joys entombing;
I swept that flower from Judah's stem,
Whose leaves for me alone were blooming;
And mine 's the guilt, and mine the hell,
This bosom's desolation dooming;
And I have earn'd those tortures well,
Which unconsumed are still consuming!

January 15, 1815.

ON THE DAY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM BY TITUS

From the last hill that looks on thy once holy dome
I beheld thee, oh Sion! when render'd to Rome:
'T was thy last sun went down, and the flames of thy fall
Flash'd back on the last glance I gave to thy wall.

I look'd for thy temple, I look'd for my home,
And forgot for a moment my bondage to come;
I beheld but the death-fire that fed on thy fane,
And the fast-fetter'd hands that made vengeance in vain.

On many an eve, the high spot whence I gazed
Had reflected the last beam of day as it blazed;
While I stood on the height, and beheld the decline
Of the rays from the mountain that shone on thy shrine.

And now on that mountain I stood on that day,
But I mark'd not the twilight beam melting away;
Oh! would that the lightning had glared in its stead,
And the thunderbolt burst on the conqueror's head!

But the Gods of the Pagan shall never profane
The shrine where Jehovah disdain'd not to reign;
And scatter'd and scorn'd as thy people may be,
Our worship, oh Father, is only for thee.

1815.

BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON WE SAT DOWN AND WEPT

We sate down and wept by the waters
Of Babel, and thought of the day
When our foe, in the hue of his slaughters,
Made Salem's high places his prey;
And ye, oh her desolate daughters!
Were scatter'd all weeping away.

While sadly we gazed on the river
Which roll'd on in freedom below,
They demanded the song; but, oh never
That triumph the stranger shall know!
May this right hand be wither'd for ever,
Ere it string our high harp for the foe!

On the willow that harp is suspended,
Oh Salem! its sound should be free;
And the hour when thy glories were ended
But left me that token of thee:
And ne'er shall its soft tones be blended
With the voice of the spoiler by me!

January 15, 1813.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd;
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride:
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

Seaham, *February* 17, 1815.

'A SPIRIT PASS'D BEFORE ME'

FROM JOB

A spirit pass'd before me: I beheld
The face of immortality unveil'd—
Deep sleep came down on every eye save mine—
And there it stood,—all formless—but divine:
Along my bones the creeping flesh did quake;
And as my damp hair stiffen'd, thus it spake:

'Is man more just than God? Is man more pure
Than he who deems even Seraphs insecure?
Creatures of clay—vain dwellers in the dust!
The moth survives you, and are ye more just?
Things of a day! you wither ere the night,
Heedless and blind to Wisdom's wasted light!'

'IN THE VALLEY OF WATERS'

[According to a note in Byron's own handwriting these stanzas are merely a variant of the preceding poem, *By the Rivers of Babylon*. Neither these stanzas nor those following were printed in the original collection.]

In the valley of waters we wept o'er the day
When the host of the stranger made Salem
his prey,
And our heads on our bosoms all droopingly lay,
And our hearts were so full of the land far
away.

The song they demanded in vain — it lay
still
In our souls, as the wind that hath died on
the hill;
They call'd for the harp — but our blood
they shall spill
Ere our right hands shall teach them one
tone of our skill.

All stringlessly hung on the willow's sad
tree,
As dead as her dead leaf those mute harps
must be;
Our hands may be fetter'd — our tears still
are free
For our God and our glory — and Sion! oh
thee!

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

[The following anecdote related by Nathan, the composer of the music, will show Byron's carelessness occasionally in regard to his verses: 'Having been officiously taken up by a person who arrogated to himself some self-importance in criticism, and who made an observation upon their demerits, Lord Byron quaintly observed, "They were written in haste, and they shall perish in the same manner!" and immediately consigned them to the flames. As my music adapted to them, however, did not share the same fate, and having a contrary opinion of anything that might fall from the pen of his Lordship, I treasured them up, and on a subsequent interview with his Lordship, I accused him of having committed suicide in making so valuable a *burnt-offering:* to which he smilingly replied, "The act seems to *inflame* you; come, Nathan, since you are displeased with the *sacrifice*, I will give them to you as a *peace-offering*, use them as you may deem proper."']

They say that Hope is happiness;
But genuine Love must prize the past,
And Memory wakes the thoughts that
bless;
They rose the first— they set the last.

And all that Memory loves the most
Was once our only Hope to be,
And all that Hope adored and lost
Hath melted into Memory.

Alas! it is delusion all;
The future cheats us from afar,
Nor can we be what we recall,
Nor dare we think on what we are.

EPHEMERAL VERSES

[These squibs, bits of satire, and broken rhymes are taken chiefly from Byron's *Letters*. None of the verses were published in any edition of his poems during the author's life. The titles and dates here given indicate the letters from which the verses are taken, when no other source is indicated.]

EPIGRAM ON AN OLD LADY WHO HAD SOME CURIOUS NOTIONS RESPECTING THE SOUL

In Nottingham county there lives at Swan
Green,
As curst an old Lady as ever was
seen;
And when she does die, which I hope will
be soon,
She firmly believes she will go to the
Moon!

1798.

[TO DIVES (WILLIAM BECKFORD). A FRAGMENT]

Unhappy Dives! in an evil hour
'Gainst Nature's voice seduced to deeds
accurst!
Once Fortune's minion now thou feel'st
her power;
Wrath's vial on thy lofty head hath
burst.
In Wit, in Genius, as in Wealth the first,
How wondrous bright thy blooming morn
arose!

But thou wert smitten with th' unhallow'd thirst
Of Crime unnamed, and thy sad noon must close
In scorn and solitude unsought, the worst of woes.

[First published, 1833.]

EPITAPH ON JOHN ADAMS, OF SOUTHWELL

A CARRIER, WHO DIED OF DRUNKENNESS

John Adams lies here, of the parish of Southwell,
A *Carrier* who *carried* his can to his mouth well;
He *carried* so much, and he *carried* so fast,
He could *carry* no more — so was *carried* at last;
For, the liquor he drank being too much for one,
He could not *carry* off, — so he's now *car-ri-on.*

September, 1807. [First published, 1830.]

FAREWELL PETITION TO J. C. H., ESQ.

[J. C. H. is of course Byron's great friend Hobhouse. Dives is William Beckford.]

O thou yclep'd by vulgar sons of Men
Cam Hobhouse! but by wags Byzantian Ben!
Twin sacred titles, which combined appear
To grace thy volume's front, and gild its rear,
Since now thou put'st thyself and work to Sea
And leav'st all Greece to *Fletcher* and to me,
Oh, hear my single muse our sorrows tell,
One song for *self* and Fletcher quite as well.

First to the *Castle* of that man of woes
Dispatch the letter which *I must* enclose,
And when his lone Penelope shall say
Why, *where*, and *wherefore* doth my William stay?
Spare not to move her pity, or her pride —
By all that Hero suffered, or defied;
The *chicken's toughness*, and the *lack* of *ale*,
The *stoney mountain* and the *miry vale*,
The *Garlick* steams, which *half* his meals enrich,
The *impending vermin*, and the threaten'd *Itch*,
That ever breaking Bed, beyond repair!
The hat too *old*, the coat too *cold* to wear,
The Hunger, *which repulsed from Sally's door*
Pursues her grumbling half from shore to shore,
Be these the themes to greet his faithful Rib,
So may thy pen be smooth, thy tongue be glib!
This duty done, let me in turn demand
Some friendly office in my native land,
Yet let me ponder well, before I ask,
And set thee swearing at the tedious task.

First the Miscellany! — to Southwell town
Per coach for Mrs. *Pigot* frank it down,
So may'st thou prosper in the paths of Sale,
And Longman smirk and critics cease to rail.

All hail to Matthews! wash his reverend feet,
And in my name the man of Method greet, —
Tell him, my Guide, Philosopher, and Friend,
Who cannot love me, and who will not mend,
Tell him, that not in vain I shall assay
To tread and trace our 'old Horatian way,'
And be (with prose supply my dearth of rhymes)
What better men have been in better times.

Here let me cease, for why should I prolong
My notes, and vex a *Singer* with a *Song*?
Oh thou with pen perpetual in thy fist!
Dubb'd for thy sins a stark Miscellanist,
So pleased the printer's orders to perform
For Messrs. *Longman*, *Hurst* and *Rees* and *Orme*.
Go — Get thee hence to Paternoster Row,
Thy patrons wave a duodecimo!
(Best form for *letters* from a distant land,
It fits the pocket, nor fatigues the hand.)

Then go, once more the joyous work commence
With stores of anecdote, and grains of sense.
Oh may Mammas relent, and Sires forgive!
And scribbling Songs grow dutiful and live!

Constantinople, *June* 7, 1810. [First published, 1887.]

'OH HOW I WISH THAT AN EMBARGO'

[To Henry Drury, June 17, 1810. A 'translation' of Euripides, *Medea*, 1–7. Written on the summit of the Cyanean Symplegades.]

Oh how I wish that an embargo
Had kept in port the good ship Argo!
Who, still unlaunch'd from Grecian docks,
Had never pass'd the Azure rocks;
But now I fear her trip will be a
Damn'd business for my Miss Medea, etc., etc.

'YOUTH, NATURE, AND RELENTING JOVE'

[To Francis Hodgson, October 3, 1810. An 'epitaph.' Romanelli was an Albanian physician who physicked Byron at Patras.]

Youth, Nature, and relenting Jove,
To keep my lamp *in* strongly strove:
But Romanelli was so stout,
He beat all three — and *blew* it *out*.

'GOOD PLAYS ARE SCARCE'

[To Francis Hodgson, September 13, 1811. Alluding to Moore's *M. P. or the Bluestocking.*]

Good plays are scarce,
So Moore writes *Farce;*
Is Fame like his so brittle?
We knew before
That '*Little* '*s*' *Moore*,
But now '*t is Moore* that 's *Little.*

'WHAT NEWS, WHAT NEWS? QUEEN ORRACA'

[To William Harness, December 6, 1811. Parodying a stanza in Southey's *Queen Orraca and the Five Martyrs of Morocco.*]

What news, what news? Queen Orraca,
What news of scribblers five?
S——, W——, C——, L——d, and L——e?
All damn'd, though yet alive.

AN ODE TO THE FRAMERS OF THE FRAME BILL

[This was first published in the *Morning Chronicle*, March 2, 1812.]

Oh well done Lord E——n! and better done R——r!
Britannia must prosper with councils like yours;
Hawkesbury, Harrowby, help you to guide her,
Whose remedy only must kill ere it cures:
Those villains, the Weavers, are all grown refractory,
Asking some succour for Charity's sake —
So hang them in clusters round each Manufactory,
That will at once put an end to *mistake.*

The rascals, perhaps, may betake them to robbing,
The dogs to be sure have got nothing to eat —
So if we can hang them for breaking a bobbin,
'T will save all the Government's money and meat:
Men are more easily made than machinery —
Stockings fetch better prices than lives —
Gibbets on Sherwood will heighten the scenery,
Shewing how Commerce on Liberty thrives!

Justice is now in pursuit of the wretches,
Grenadiers, Volunteers, Bow-street Police,
Twenty-two Regiments, a score of Jack Ketches,
Three of the Quorum and two of the Peace;
Some Lords, to be sure, would have summon'd the Judges,
To take their opinion, but that they ne'er shall,
For Liverpool such a concession begrudges,
So now they 're condemn'd by *no Judges* at all.

Some folks for certain have thought it was shocking,
When Famine appeals and when Poverty groans,
That life should be valued at less than a stocking,
And breaking of frames lead to breaking of bones.
If it should prove so, I trust, by this token
(And who will refuse to partake in the hope?),
That the frames of the fools may be first to be *broken*,
Who, when asked for a *remedy*, sent them a *rope*.

[R. C. DALLAS]

Yes! wisdom shines in all his mien,
Which would so captivate, I ween,
Wisdom's own goddess Pallas;
That she'd discard her fav'rite owl,
And take for pet a brother fowl,
Sagacious R. C. Dallas.

[First published, 1825.]

'OH YOU, WHO IN ALL NAMES CAN TICKLE THE TOWN'

[To Thomas Moore, May 19, 1813. Appointing a visit to Leigh Hunt in prison.]

Oh you, who in all names can tickle the town,
Anacreon, Tom Little, Tom Moore, or Tom Brown, —
For hang me if I know of which you may most brag,
Your Quarto two-pounds, or your Twopenny Post Bag;

. . . .

But now to my letter — to *yours* 't is an answer —
To-morrow be with me, as soon as you can, sir,
All ready and dress'd for proceeding to spunge on
(According to compact) the wit in the dungeon —
Pray Phœbus at length our political malice
May not get us lodgings within the same palace!
I suppose that to-night you're engaged with some codgers,
And for Sotheby's Blues have deserted Sam Rogers;
And I, though with cold I have nearly my death got,
Must put on my breeches, and wait on the Heathcote.
But to-morrow at four, we will both play the *Scurra*,
And you'll be Catullus, the Regent Mamurra.

'WHEN THURLOW THIS DAMN'D NONSENSE SENT'

[To Thomas Moore, June, 1813. Byron and Moore were supping with Rogers on bread and cheese when their host brought forth Lord Thurlow's *Poems on Several Occasions* (1813). 'In vain did Mr. Rogers (to whom a copy of the work had been presented),' says Moore in his *Life*, 'in justice to the author, endeavour to direct our attention to some of the beauties of the work. One of the poems was a warm and, I need not add, well-deserved panegyric on himself. The opening line of the poem was, as well as I can recollect, —

"When Rogers o'er this labour bent."

And Lord Byron undertook to read it aloud; but he found it impossible to get beyond the first two words. Our laughter had now increased to such a pitch that nothing could restrain it. Two or three times he began, but, no sooner had the words "When Rogers" passed his lips, than our fit burst forth afresh — till even Mr. Rogers himself, with all his feeling of our injustice, found it impossible not to join us; and had the author himself been of the party, I question much whether he could have resisted the infection.' A day or two later Byron sent the following verses in a letter to Moore.]

When Thurlow this damn'd nonsense sent
(I hope I am not violent),
Nor men nor gods knew what he meant.

And since not even our Rogers' praise
To common sense his thoughts could raise —
Why *would* they let him print his lays?

. . . .
. . . .

To me, divine Apollo, grant — O!
Hermilda's first and second canto,
I'm fitting up a new portmanteau;

And thus to furnish decent lining,
My own and others' bays I 'm twining —
So, gentle Thurlow, throw me thine in.

TO LORD THURLOW

'I lay my branch of laurel down:
Then thus to form Apollo's crown,
Let every other bring his own.'
Lord Thurlow's lines to Mr. Rogers.

[On the same day with the preceding Byron sent to Moore the following stanzas on Lord Thurlow's lines.]

'I lay my branch of laurel down.'
Thou 'lay thy branch of *laurel* down!'
Why, what thou 'st stole is not enow;
And, were it lawfully thine own,
Does Rogers want it most, or thou?
Keep to thyself thy wither'd bough,
Or send it back to Doctor Donne:
Were justice done to both, I trow,
He 'd have but little, and thou — none.

'Then thus to form Apollo's crown.'
A crown! why, twist it how you will,
Thy chaplet must be foolscap still.
When next you visit Delphi's town,
Inquire amongst your fellow-lodgers,
They 'll tell you Phœbus gave his crown,
Some years before your birth, to Rogers.

'Let every other bring his own.'
When coals to Newcastle are carried,
And owls sent to Athens, as wonders,
From his spouse when the Regent 's unmarried,
Or Liverpool weeps o'er his blunders;
When Tories and Whigs cease to quarrel,
When Castlereagh's wife has an heir,
Then Rogers shall ask us for laurel,
And thou shalt have plenty to spare.

ANSWER TO ——'S PROFESSIONS OF AFFECTION

[First published in the Edition of 1904 from an autograph manuscript. Dated by conjecture 1814.]

In hearts like thine ne'er may I hold a place
Till I renounce all sense, all shame, all grace —
That seat, — like seats, the bane of Freedom's realm,
But dear to those presiding at the helm —
Is basely purchased, not with gold alone;
Add Conscience, too, this bargain is your own —
'T is thine to offer with corrupting art
The *rotten borough* of the human heart.

FRAGMENT OF AN EPISTLE TO THOMAS MOORE

[These verses refer to the meeting of the 'Allied Sovereigns.' Southey had celebrated the commencement of the year 1814 in his *Carmen Triumphale*, in the refrain of which occur the words 'Glory to God.' The Laureate also celebrated in an ode *The Allied Sovereigns in England.*]

'What say *I?*' — not a syllable further in prose;
I 'm your man 'of all measures,' dear Tom, — so here goes!
Here goes, for a swim on the stream of old Time,
On those buoyant supporters, the bladders of rhyme.
If our weight breaks them down and we sink in the flood,
We are smother'd, at least, in respectable mud,
Where the Divers of Bathos lie drown'd in a heap,
And Southey's last Pæan has pillow'd his sleep; —
That 'Felo de se' who, half drunk with his malmsey,
Walk'd out of his depth and was lost in a calm sea,
Singing 'Glory to God' in a spick and span stanza,
The like (since Tom Sternhold was choked) never man saw.

The papers have told you, no doubt, of the fusses,
The fêtes and the gapings to get at these Russes, —
Of his Majesty's suite, up from coachman to Hetman, —
And what dignity decks the flat face of the great man.
I saw him, last week, at two balls and a party, —

For a prince, his demeanour was rather too
hearty.
You know, *we* are used to quite different
graces,
. . . .

The Czar's look, I own, was much brighter
and brisker,
But then he is sadly deficient in whisker;
And wore but a starless blue coat, and in
kersey-
-mere breeches whisk'd round, in a waltz
with the Jersey,
Who, lovely as ever, seem'd just as delighted
With majesty's presence as those she invited.
. . . .
. . . .

June, 1814. [First published, 1830.]

WINDSOR POETICS

LINES COMPOSED ON THE OCCASION OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE REGENT BEING SEEN STANDING BETWEEN THE COFFINS OF HENRY VIII. AND CHARLES I., IN THE ROYAL VAULT AT WINDSOR

Famed for contemptuous breach of sacred
ties,
By headless Charles see heartless Henry lies:
Between them stands another sceptred
thing —
It moves, it reigns — in all but name, a king:

Charles to his people, Henry to his wife,
— In him the double tyrant starts to life:
Justice and death have mix'd their dust in
vain,
Each royal vampire wakes to life again.
Ah, what can tombs avail! — since these
disgorge
The blood and dust of both — to mould a
George.

[First published, 1819.]

[Another version.]

ON A ROYAL VISIT TO THE VAULTS

OR CÆSAR'S DISCOVERY OF C. I. AND H. 8. IN YE SAME VAULT

[First published in the Edition of 1904 from a manuscript in the possession of Mr. Murray.]

Famed for their civil and domestic quar-
rels,
See heartless Henry lies by headless
Charles;
Between them stands another sceptred
thing,
It lives, it reigns — 'aye, every inch a
king.'
Charles to his people, Henry to his wife,
In him the double tyrant starts to life:
Justice and Death have mix'd their dust in
vain,
The royal Vampires join and rise again.
What now can tombs avail, since these dis-
gorge
The blood and dirt of both to mould a
George!

1814.

ICH DIEN

[First published in the Edition of 1904 from a manuscript in the possession of Mr. A. H. Hallam Murray. Dated by conjecture 1814.]

From this emblem what variance your
motto evinces,
For the *Man* is his country's — the Arms
are the Prince's!

'HERE'S TO HER WHO LONG'

[To Thomas Moore, September 20, 1814. On being accepted by Miss Milbanke.]

Here's to her who long
Hath waked the poet's sigh!
The girl who gave to song
What gold could never buy.

'ONCE FAIRLY SET OUT ON HIS PARTY OF PLEASURE'

[To Thomas Moore, March 27, 1815. On the return of Napoleon from Elba.]

Once fairly set out on his party of plea-
sure,
Taking towns at his liking and crowns at
his leisure,
From Elba to Lyons and Paris he goes,
Making *balls for* the ladies, and *bows* to his
foes.

'IN THIS BELOVED MARBLE VIEW'

[To John Murray, Venice, November 25, 1816. 'The *Helen* of Canova (a bust which is in the house of Madame the Countess d'Albrizzi, whom I know) is, without exception, to my mind, the most perfectly beautiful of human conceptions, and far beyond my ideas of human execution.')

In this belovèd marble view
Above the works and thoughts of Man,
What Nature *could*, but *would not*, do,
And Beauty and Canova *can!*
Beyond Imagination's power,
Beyond the Bard's defeated art,
With Immortality her dower,
Behold the *Helen* of the *heart!*

'AND DOST THOU ASK THE REASON OF MY SADNESS?'

[To George Anson Byron (?). Dated by conjecture 1816.]

And dost thou ask the reason of my sadness?
Well, I will tell it thee, unfeeling boy!
'T was ill report that urged my brain to madness,
'T was thy tongue's venom poison'd all my joy.

The sadness which thou seest is not sorrow;
My wounds are far too deep for simple grief;
The heart thus wither'd, seeks in vain to borrow
From calm reflection, comfort or relief.

The arrow 's flown, and dearly shalt thou rue it;
No mortal hand can rid me of my pain:
My heart is pierced, but thou canst not subdue it —
Revenge is left, and is not left in vain.

'AS THE LIBERTY LADS O'ER THE SEA'

[To Thomas Moore, Venice, December 24, 1816. The riots of the so-called Luddites broke out in 1811, and were aimed chiefly at the destruction of machinery which was supposed to have occasioned the scarcity of labor.]

As the Liberty lads o'er the sea
Bought their freedom, and cheaply, with blood,
So we, boys, we
Will *die* fighting, or *live* free;
And down with all kings but King Ludd!

When the web that we weave is complete,
And the shuttle exchanged for the sword,
We will fling the winding-sheet
O'er the despot at our feet,
And dye it deep in the gore he has pour'd.

Though black as his heart its hue,
Since his veins are corrupted to mud,
Yet this is the dew
Which the tree shall renew
Of Liberty, planted by Ludd!

What are you doing now,
Oh Thomas Moore?
What are you doing now,
Oh Thomas Moore?
Sighing or suing now,
Rhyming or wooing now,
Billing or cooing now,
Which, Thomas Moore?

But the Carnival 's coming,
Oh Thomas Moore!
The Carnival 's coming,
Oh Thomas Moore!
Masking and humming,
Fifing and drumming,
Guitarring and strumming,
Oh Thomas Moore!

'SO WE'LL GO NO MORE A ROVING'

[To Thomas Moore, Venice, February 28, 1817. 'At present, I am on the invalid regimen myself. The Carnival — that is, the latter part of it — and sitting up late o' nights, had knocked me up a little.']

So we 'll go no more a roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And Love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we 'll go no more a roving
By the light of the moon.

'I READ THE "CHRISTABEL"'

[To Thomas Moore, March 25, 1817. 'Here are some versicles, which I made one sleepless night.' *The Missionary of the Andes* is by Bowles; *Ilderim*, by H. Gally Knight; *Margaret of Anjou*, by Margaret Holford; *Waterloo and other Poems*, by J. Wedderburn Webster; *Glenarvon, a Novel*, by Lady Caroline Lamb.]

I READ the *Christabel;*
Very well:
I read the *Missionary;*
Pretty — very:
I tried at *Ilderim;*
Ahem!
I read a sheet of *Marg'ret of Anjou;*
Can you?
I turn'd a page of Webster's *Waterloo;*
Pooh! pooh!
I look'd at Wordsworth's milk-white *Rylstone Doe;*
Hillo!
I read *Glenarvon*, too, by Caro. Lamb —
God damn!

'TO HOOK THE READER, YOU, JOHN MURRAY'

[To John Murray, March 25, 1817.]

To hook the reader, you, John Murray,
Have publish'd *Anjou's Margaret*,
Which won't be sold off in a hurry
(At least, it has not been as yet);
And then, still further to bewilder 'em,
Without remorse you set up *Ilderim;*
So mind you don't get into debt,
Because as how, if you should fail,
These books would be but baddish bail.
And mind you do *not* let escape
These rhymes to *Morning Post* or Perry,
Which would be *very* treacherous — *very*,
And get me into such a scrape!
For, firstly, I should have to sally,
All in my little boat, against a *Galley*,
And, should I chance to slay the Assyrian wight,
Have next to combat with the female knight.
And prick'd to death expire upon her needle,
A sort of end which I should take indeed ill!

'GOD MADDENS HIM WHOM 'TIS HIS WILL TO LOSE'

[To John Murray, April 2, 1817. '*Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat*, which may be done into English thus:' —]

GOD maddens him whom 'tis his will to lose,
And gives the choice of death or phrenzy — choose.

'MY BOAT IS ON THE SHORE'

[To Thomas Moore, July 10, 1817. 'This should have been written fifteen months ago — the first stanza was. I am just come out from an hour's swim in the Adriatic; and I write to you with a black-eyed Venetian girl before me, reading Boccaccio.' It would not be easy to find a better example than these stanzas of Byron's facility and grace.]

MY boat is on the shore,
And my bark is on the sea;
But, before I go, Tom Moore,
Here 's a double health to thee!

Here 's a sigh to those who love me,
And a smile to those who hate;
And, whatever sky 's above me,
Here 's a heart for every fate.

Though the ocean roar around me,
Yet it still shall bear me on;
Though a desert should surround me,
It hath springs that may be won.

Were 't the last drop in the well,
As I gasp'd upon the brink,
Ere my fainting spirit fell,
'T is to thee that I would drink.

With that water, as this wine,
The libation I would pour
Should be — peace with thine and mine,
And a health to thee, Tom Moore.

'NO INFANT SOTHEBY, WHOSE DAUNTLESS HEAD'

[To John Murray, July 15, 1817. 'Have you no new Babe of Literature sprung up to replace the dead, the distant, the tired, and the *re*tired? no prose, no verse, no *nothing?*']

No infant Sotheby, whose dauntless head
  Translates, misunderstood, a deal of German;
No city Wordsworth, more admired than read,
  No drunken Coleridge with a new *Lay Sermon.*

'DEAR DOCTOR, I HAVE READ YOUR PLAY'

[To John Murray, August 21, 1817. Murray had written to Byron: 'Polidori has sent me his tragedy! Do me the kindness to send by return of post a *delicate* declension of it, which I engage faithfully to copy.' The following is Byron's 'civil and delicate declension for the medical tragedy.']

Dear Doctor, I have read your play,
Which is a good one in its way, —
Purges the eyes and moves the bowels,
And drenches handkerchiefs like towels
With tears, that, in a flux of grief,
Afford hysterical relief
To shatter'd nerves and quicken'd pulses,
Which your catastrophe convulses.
  I like your moral and machinery;
Your plot, too, has such scope for Scenery;
Your dialogue is apt and smart;
The play's concoction full of art;
Your hero raves, your heroine cries,
All stab, and everybody dies.
In short, your tragedy would be
The very thing to hear and see;
And for a piece of publication,
If I decline on this occasion,
It is not that I am not sensible
To merits in themselves ostensible,
But — and I grieve to speak it — plays
Are drugs — mere drugs, Sir — now-a-days.
I had a heavy loss by *Manuel*, —
Too lucky if it prove not annual, —
And Sotheby, with his damn'd *Orestes*
(Which, by the way, the old Bore's best is),
Has lain so very long on hand
That I despair of all demand.
I've advertised, but see my books,
Or only watch my Shopman's looks; —
Still *Ivan*, *Ina*, and such lumber,
My back-shop glut, my shelves encumber.
  There's Byron, too, who once did better,
Has sent me, folded in a letter,
A sort of — it's no more a drama
Than *Darnley*, *Ivan*, or *Kehama;*
So alter'd since last year his pen is,
I think he's lost his wits at Venice,
. . . .
. . . .
In short, sir, what with one and t'other,
I dare not venture on another.
I write in haste; excuse each blunder;
The Coaches through the street so thunder!
My Room's so full; we've Gifford here
Reading MSS., with Hookham Frere,
Pronouncing on the nouns and particles
Of some of our forthcoming Articles.
  The *Quarterly* — Ah, Sir, if you
Had but the Genius to review! —
A smart Critique upon St. Helena,
Or if you only would but tell in a
Short compass what — but, to resume:
As I was saying, Sir, the Room —
The Room's so full of wits and bards,
Crabbes, Campbells, Crokers, Freres, and Wards
And others, neither bards nor wits: —
My humble tenement admits
All persons in the dress of gent.,
From Mr. Hammond to Dog Dent.

  A party dines with me to-day,
All clever men, who make their way;
Crabbe, Malcolm, Hamilton, and Chantrey,
Are all partakers of my pantry.
They're at this moment in discussion
On poor De Staël's late dissolution.
Her book, they say, was in advance —
Pray Heaven! she tell the truth of France!
'T is said she certainly was married
To Rocca, and had twice miscarried,
No — not miscarried, I opine, —
But brought to bed at forty-nine.
Some say she died a Papist; Some
Are of opinion *that*'s a Hum;
I don't know that — the fellow, Schlegel,
Was very likely to inveigle
A dying person in compunction
To try the extremity of Unction.
But peace be with her! for a woman
Her talents surely were uncommon.

Her Publisher (and Public too)
The hour of her demise may rue —
For never more within his shop he —
Pray — was not she interr'd at Coppet?
Thus run our time and tongues away. —
But, to return, Sir, to your play:
Sorry, Sir, but I cannot deal,
Unless 't were acted by O'Neill.
My hands are full, my head so busy,
I 'm almost dead, and always dizzy;
And so, with endless truth and hurry,
Dear Doctor, I am yours,
John Murray.

August, 1817.

'MY DEAR MR. MURRAY'

[To John Murray, January 8, 1818. Byron was sending home the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* by his friend Hobhouse. The *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine* was begun in 1817.]

My dear Mr. Murray,
You 're in a damn'd hurry
To set up this ultimate Canto;
But (if they don't rob us)
You 'll see Mr. Hobhouse
Will bring it safe in his portmanteau.

For the Journal you hint of,
As ready to print off,
No doubt you do right to commend it;
But as yet I have writ off
The devil a bit of
Our *Beppo*: — when copied, I 'll send it.

In the mean time you 've 'Galley'
Whose verses all tally,
Perhaps you may say he 's a Ninny,
But if you abash'd are
Because of *Alashtar*,
He 'll drivel another *Phrosine*.

Then you 've Sotheby's tour,
No great things, to be sure, —
You could hardly begin with a less work;
For the pompous rascallion,
Who don't speak Italian
Nor French, must have scribbled by guess-work.

No doubt he 's a rare man
Without knowing German
Translating his way up Parnassus,
And now still absurder
He meditates Murder
As you 'll see in the trash he calls *Tasso's*.

But you 've others his betters
The real men of letters
Your Orators — Critics — and Wits, —
And I 'll bet that your Journal
(Pray is it diurnal?)
Will pay with your luckiest hits.

You can make any loss up
With 'Spence' and his gossip,
A work which must surely succeed;
Then Queen Mary's Epistle-craft,
With the new 'Fytte' of 'Whistlecraft,'
Must make people purchase and read.

Then you 've General Gordon,
Who girded his sword on,
To serve with a Muscovite Master;
And help him to polish
A nation so owlish,
They thought shaving their beards a disaster.

For the man, '*poor and shrewd*,'
With whom you 'd conclude
A compact without more delay,
Perhaps some such pen is
Still extant in Venice;
But please, sir, to mention *your pay*.

Now tell me some news
Of your friends and the Muse
Of the Bar, or the Gown, or the House,
From Canning, the tall wit,
To Wilmot, the small wit,
Ward's creeping Companion and *Louse*,

Who 's so damnably bit
With fashion and Wit,
That he crawls on the surface like Vermin,
But an Insect in both, —
By his Intellect's growth
Of what size you may quickly determine.

[E NIHILO NIHIL;

OR AN EPIGRAM BEWITCHED]

[First published in Edition of 1904 from a manuscript in possession of Mr. Murray.]

Of rhymes I printed seven volumes —
The list concludes John Murray's columns:

Of these there have been few translations
For Gallic or Italian nations;
And one or two perhaps in German, —
But in this last I can't determine.
But then I only sung of passions
That do not suit with modern fashions;
Of Incest and such like diversions
Permitted only to the Persians,
Or Greeks to bring upon their stages —
But that was in the earlier ages.
Besides my style is the romantic,
Which some call fine, and some call frantic;
While others are or would seem *as* sick
Of repetitions nicknamed Classic.
For my part all men must allow
Whatever I was, I 'm classic now.
I saw and left my fault in time,
And chose a topic all sublime —
Wondrous as antient war or hero —
Then play'd and sung away like Nero,
Who sang of Rome, and I of Rizzo:
The subject has improved my wit so,
The first four lines the poet sees
Start forth in fourteen languages!
Though of seven volumes none before
Could ever reach the fame of four,
Henceforth I sacrifice all Glory
To the Rinaldo of my Story:
I 've sung his health and appetite
(The last word 's not translated right —
He 's turn'd it, God knows how, to vigour);
I 'll sing them in a book that 's bigger.
Oh! Muse prepare for thy Ascension!
And generous Rizzo! thou my pension.
February, 1818.

ON THE BIRTH OF JOHN WILLIAM RIZZO HOPPNER

His father's sense, his mother's grace,
In him, I hope, will always fit so;
With — still to keep him in good case —
The health and appetite of Rizzo.
February 20, 1818.

BALLAD

TO THE TUNE OF 'SALLY IN OUR ALLEY'

[First published complete in the Edition of 1904 from a manuscript in the possession of Mr. Murray. This and the two following poems are in a letter to John Murray, dated April 11, 1818.]

Of all the twice ten thousand bards
That ever penn'd a canto,
Whom Pudding or whom Praise rewards
For lining a portmanteau;
Of all the poets ever known,
From Grub-street to Fop's Alley,
The Muse may boast — the World must own
There 's none like pretty Gally!

He writes as well as any Miss,
Has publish'd many a poem;
The shame is yours, the gain is his,
In case you should not know 'em:
He has ten thousand pounds a year —
I do not mean to vally —
His songs at sixpence would be dear,
So give them gratis, Gally!

And if this statement should seem queer,
Or set down in a hurry,
Go, ask (if he will be sincere)
His bookseller — John Murray.
Come, say, how many have been sold,
And don't stand shilly-shally,
Of bound and letter'd, red and gold,
Well printed works of Gally.

For Astley's circus Upton writes,
And also for the Surry (*sic*);
Fitzgerald weekly still recites,
Though grinning Critics worry:
Miss Holford's Peg, and Sotheby's Saul,
In fame exactly tally;
From Stationer's Hall to Grocer's Stall
They go — and so does Gally.

He rode upon a Camel's hump
Through Araby the sandy,
Which surely must have hurt the rump
Of this poetic dandy.
His rhymes are of the costive kind,
And barren as each valley
In deserts which he left behind
Has been the Muse of Gally.

He has a Seat in Parliament,
Is fat and passing wealthy;
And surely he should be content
With these and being healthy:
But Great Ambition will misrule
Men at all risks to sally, —
Now makes a poet — now a fool,
And *we* know *which* — of Gally.

Some in the playhouse like to row,
Some with the Watch to battle.

Exchanging many a midnight blow
To Music of the Rattle.
Some folks like rowing on the Thames,
Some rowing in an Alley,
But all the Row my fancy claims
Is *rowing* of my *Gally*.

ANOTHER SIMPLE BALLAT

[First published complete in the Edition of 1904 from a manuscript in the possession of Mr. Murray.]

Mrs. Wilmot sate scribbling a play,
Mr. Sotheby sate sweating behind her;
But what are all these to the Lay
Of Gally i. o. the Grinder?
Gally i. o. i. o., etc.

I bought me some books tother day,
And sent them down stairs to the binder;
But the Pastry Cook carried away
My Gally i. o. the Grinder.
Gally i. o. i. o., etc.

I wanted to kindle my taper,
And call'd to the Maid to remind her;
And what should she bring me for paper
But Gally i. o. the Grinder.
Gally i. o. i. o.

Among my researches for Ease
I went where one 's certain to find her:
The first thing by her throne that one sees
Is Gally i. o. the Grinder.
Gally i. o. i. o.

Away with old Homer the blind —
I 'll show you a poet that 's blinder:
You may see him whene'er you 've a mind
In Gally i. o. the Grinder.
Gally i. o. i. o., etc.

Blindfold he runs groping for fame,
And hardly knows where he will find her:
She don't seem to take to the name
Of Gally i. o. the Grinder.
Gally i. o. i. o., etc.

Yet Critics have been very kind,
And Mamma and his friends have been kinder;
But the greatest of Glory 's behind
For Gally i. o. the Grinder.
Gally i. o. i. o.

'STRAHAN, TONSON, LINTOT OF THE TIMES'

Strahan, Tonson, Lintot of the times,
Patron and publisher of rhymes,
For thee the bard up Pindus climbs,
My Murray.

To thee, with hope and terror dumb,
The unfledged MS. authors come;
Thou printest all — and sellest some —
My Murray.

Upon thy table's baize so green
The last new *Quarterly* is seen;
But where is thy new Magazine,
My Murray?

Along thy sprucest book-shelves shine
The works thou deemest most divine —
The *Art of Cookery*, and mine,
My Murray.

Tours, Travels, Essays, too, I wist,
And Sermons to thy mill bring grist;
And then thou hast the *Navy List*,
My Murray.

And Heaven forbid I should conclude
Without 'the Board of Longitude,'
Although this narrow paper would,
My Murray!

'IF FOR SILVER, OR FOR GOLD'

[To John Murray, August 12, 1819. 'This was written on some Frenchwoman, by Rulhières, I believe.']

If for silver, or for gold,
You could melt ten thousand pimples
Into half a dozen dimples,
Then your face we might behold,
Looking, doubtless, much more smugly,
Yet even then 't would be damn'd ugly.

EPILOGUE

[First published in *Philadelphia Record*, December 28, 1891.]

There 's something in a stupid ass,
And something in a heavy dunce;
But never since I went to school
I heard or saw so damn'd a fool
As William Wordsworth is for once.

And now I 've seen so great a fool
As William Wordsworth is for once;
I really wish that Peter Bell
And he who wrote it were in hell,
For writing nonsense for the nonce.

It saw the 'light in ninety-eight,'
Sweet babe of one and twenty years!
And then he gives it to the nation
And deems himself of Shakespeare's peers!

He gives the perfect work to light!
Will Wordsworth, if I might advise,
Content you with the praise you get
From Sir George Beaumont, Baronet,
And with your place in the Excise!
1819.

'HERE'S A HAPPY NEW YEAR! BUT WITH REASON'

[To Thomas Moore, January 2, 1820. The anniversary of his wedding.]

HERE 's a happy new year! but with reason,
I beg you 'll permit me to say —
Wish me *many* returns of the *season*,
But as *few* as you please of the *day*.

I send you an epitaph for Castlereagh: —

POSTERITY will ne'er survey
A nobler grave than this;
Here lie the bones of Castlereagh:
Stop, traveller, . . .

Another for Pitt: —

WITH death doom'd to grapple,
Beneath this cold slab, he
Who lied in the Chapel
Now lies in the Abbey.

The gods seem to have made me poetical this day: —

IN digging up your bones, Tom Paine,
Will. Cobbett has done well:
You visit him on earth again,
He 'll visit you in hell.

NEW SONG TO THE TUNE OF

'WHARE HAE YE BEEN A' DAY,
MY BOY TAMMY O?
COURTING O' A YOUNG THING,
JUST COME FRAE HER MAMMIE O?'

[To John Murray, March 23, 1820. Hobhouse had been committed to Newgate Prison for several weeks for a parliamentary 'breach of privilege.' He was chosen a member for Westminster at the next election.]

How came you in Hob's pound to cool,
My boy Hobbie O?
Because I bade the people pull
The House into the Lobby O.

What did the House upon this call,
My boy Hobbie O?
They voted me to Newgate all,
Which is an awkward Jobby O.

Who are now the people's men,
My boy Hobbie O?
There 's I and Burdett — Gentlemen,
And blackguard Hunt and Cobby O.

You hate the house — why canvass, then,
My boy Hobbie O?
Because I would reform the den
As member for the Mobby O.

Wherefore do you hate the Whigs,
My boy Hobbie O?
Because they want to run their rigs,
As under Walpole Bobby O.

But when we at Cambridge were,
My boy Hobbie O,
If my memory don't err,
You founded a Whig Clubby O.

When to the mob you make a speech,
My boy Hobbie O,
How do you keep without their reach
The watch within your fobby O?

But never mind such petty things,
My boy Hobbie O;
God save the people — damn all Kings,
So let us Crown the Mobby O!

'WOULD YOU GO TO THE HOUSE BY THE TRUE GATE'

[To John Murray, April 9, 1820. 'I send you "a Song of Triumph" by W. Botherby, Esq^{re}, price sixpence, on the Election of J. C. H. Esqre for Westminster (*not* for publication).']

Would you go to the House by the true gate,
Much faster than ever Whig Charley went;
Let Parliament send you to Newgate,
And Newgate will send you to Parliament.

'YOU ASK FOR A "VOLUME OF NONSENSE"'

[To John Murray, September 28, 1820.]

You ask for a '*Volume of Nonsense*,'
Have all of your authors exhausted their store?
I thought you had publish'd a good deal not long since,
And doubtless the Squadron are ready with more.
But on looking again, I perceive that the Species
Of 'Nonsense' you want must be purely '*facetious*;'
And, as that is the case, you had best put to press
Mr. Sotheby's tragedies now in MSS.
Some Syrian Sally
From common-place Gally,
Or, if you prefer the bookmaking of women,
Take a spick and Span 'Sketch' of your feminine *He-man*.

'WHEN A MAN HATH NO FREEDOM TO FIGHT FOR AT HOME'

[To Thomas Moore, November 5, 1820.]

When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home,
Let him combat for that of his neighbours;
Let him think of the glories of Greece and of Rome,
And get knock'd on the head for his labours.

To do good to mankind is the chivalrous plan,
And is always as nobly requited;
Then battle for freedom wherever you can,
And, if not shot or hang'd, you 'll get knighted.

Here is one I wrote for the endorsement of 'the Deed of Separation' in 1816; but the lawyers objected to it, as superfluous. It was written as we were getting up the signing and sealing. —— has the original.

ENDORSEMENT TO THE DEED OF SEPARATION, IN THE APRIL OF 1816

A year ago you swore, fond she!
'To love, to honour,' and so forth:
Such was the vow you pledged to me,
And here 's exactly what 't is worth.

For the anniversary of January 2, 1821, I have a small grateful anticipation, which, in case of accident, I add —

TO PENELOPE, JANUARY 2, 1821

This day, of all our days, has done
The worst for me and you: —
'T is just *six* years since we were *one*,
And *five* since we were *two*.

'THROUGH LIFE'S DULL ROAD, SO DIM AND DIRTY'

[From Byron's *Diary*, January 21, 1821. 'It is three minutes past twelve . . . and I am now thirty-three.']

Through life's dull road, so dim and dirty,
I have dragg'd to three-and-thirty.
What have these years left to me?
Nothing — except thirty-three.

January 22, 1821.

'THE BRAZIERS, IT SEEMS, ARE PREPARING TO PASS'

[To Thomas Moore, January 22, 1821. 'Have you heard that the "Braziers' Company" have or mean to present an address at Brandenburgh House, "in armour," and with all possible variety and splendour of brazen apparel?']

The braziers, it seems, are preparing to pass
An address, and present it themselves all in brass —
A superfluous pageant — for, by the Lord Harry,
They 'll find where they 're going much more than they carry.

There 's an Ode for you, is it not? — worthy
Of Wordsworth, the grand metaquizzical poet,
A man of vast merit, though few people know it;
The perusal of whom (as I told *you* at Mestri)
I owe, in great part, to my passion for pastry.

THOUGHTS FOR A SPEECH OF LUCIFER, IN THE TRAGEDY OF 'CAIN'

[From Byron's *Diary*, January 28, 1821.]

Were *Death* an *evil*, would *I* let thee *live?*
Fool! live as I live — as thy father lives,
And thy sons' sons shall live for evermore.

BOWLES AND CAMPBELL

To the air of '*How now, Madame Flirt*,' in the *Beggars' Opera*.

[To Thomas Moore, February 22, 1821.]

Bowles. Why, how now, saucy Tom,
If you thus must ramble,
I will publish some
Remarks on Mr. Campbell.

ANSWER

Campbell. Why, how now, Billy Bowles?
Sure the priest is maudlin!
(*To the public.*) How can you, damn your souls!
Listen to his twaddling?

ELEGY

Behold the blessings of a lucky lot!
My play is *damn'd*, and Lady Noel *not*.

May 25, 1821.

'THE WORLD IS A BUNDLE OF HAY'

[To Thomas Moore, June 22, 1821. 'You say nothing of politics — but, alas! what can be said?']

The world is a bundle of hay,
Mankind are the asses who pull,
Each tugs it a different way, —
And the greatest of all is John Bull!

'BRAVE CHAMPIONS! GO ON WITH THE FARCE'

[To John Murray, June 29, 1821. 'So Canning and Burdett have been quarrelling: if I mistake not, the last time of their single combats, each was shot in the thigh by his Antagonist; and their Correspondence might be headed thus, by any wicked wag.']

Brave Champions! go on with the farce!
Reversing the spot where you bled;
Last time both were shot in the . . . ;
Now (damn you) get knock'd on the *head!*

'WHO KILL'D JOHN KEATS?'

[To John Murray, July 30, 1821. 'Are you aware that Shelley has written an elegy on Keats, and accuses the *Quarterly* of killing him?' — Byron alludes again to this matter, *Don Juan*, xi. 60.]

'Who kill'd John Keats?'
'I,' says the *Quarterly*,
So savage and Tartarly;
''T was one of my feats.'

'Who shot the arrow?'
'The poet-priest Milman
(So ready to kill man),
Or Southey or Barrow!'

FROM THE FRENCH

[To Thomas Moore, August 2, 1821. '*Ecco* a translation literal of a French epigram.']

Ægle, beauty and poet, has two little crimes;
She makes her own face, and does *not* make her rhymes.

'FOR ORFORD AND FOR WALDEGRAVE'

[To John Murray, August 23, 1821. Murray had offered £2000 for *Sardanapalus*, *The Two Foscari* and three cantos of *Don Juan*. Murray was the publisher of Walpole's *Memoirs of the last Nine Years of the Reign of George II.*, and of *Memoirs by James Earl Waldegrave.*]

For Orford and for Waldegrave
You give much more than me you *gave;*
Which is not fairly to behave,
My Murray!

Because if a live dog, 't is said,
Be worth a Lion fairly sped,
A *live lord* must be worth *two* dead,
My Murray!

And if, as the opinion goes,
Verse hath a better sale than prose —
Certes, I should have more than those,
My Murray!

But now this sheet is nearly cramm'd,
So, if *you will*, *I* shan't be shamm'd,
And if you *won't*, — *you* may be damn'd,
My Murray.

'WHAT MATTER THE PANGS OF A HUSBAND AND FATHER'

[To Thomas Moore, September 29, 1821. In this letter Byron inclosed a letter to Lady Byron and also a poem written some time before on seeing a paragraph in a newspaper to the effect that Lady Byron had been 'Lady Patroness of the Charity Ball given in the Town Hall at Hinckley.']

What matter the pangs of a husband and father,
If his sorrows in exile be great or be small,
So the Pharisee's glories around her she gather,
And the saint patronizes her 'Charity Ball.'

What matters — a heart which, though faulty was feeling,
Be driven to excesses which once could appal —
That the sinner should suffer is only fair dealing,
As the saint keeps her charity back for 'the Ball!'

[NAPOLEON'S SNUFF-BOX]

[See Medwin's *Conversations of Lord Byron*, page 235.]

Lady, accept the box a hero wore,
In spite of all this elegiac stuff:
Let not seven stanzas written by a bore,
Prevent your Ladyship from taking snuff!
1821.

EPIGRAMS

Oh, Castlereagh! thou art a patriot now;
Cato died for his country, so didst thou:
He perish'd rather than see Rome enslaved,
Thou cutt'st thy throat that Britain may be saved!

So Castlereagh has cut his throat! — The worst
Of this is, — that his own was not the first.

So *He* has cut his throat at last! — He! Who?
The man who cut his country's long ago.
August, 1822.

THE NEW VICAR OF BRAY

[George Frederick Nott (1767–1841) was Rector of Harrietsham and Woodchurch. While in Italy he preached in the basement story of Shelley's house at Pisa. He attacked the Satanic school, and especially Byron's *Cain.*]

Do you know Dr. Nott?
With 'a crook in his lot,'
Who seven years since tried to dish up
A neat Codic*il*
To the Princess's Will,
Which made Dr. Nott *not* a bishop.

So the Doctor being found
A little unsound
In his doctrine, at least as a teacher,
And kick'd from one stool
As a knave or a fool,
He mounted another as preacher.

In that Gown (like the Skin
With no Lion within)
He still for the Bench would be driving;

And roareth away,
A new Vicar of *Bray*,
Except that *his bray* lost his living.

'’Gainst Freethinkers,' he roars,
'You should all block your doors
Or be named in the Devil's indentures:'
And here I agree.
For *who* e'er would be
A Guest where old Simony enters?

Let the Priest, who beguiled
His own Sovereign's child
To his own dirty views of promotion,
Wear his Sheep's clothing still
Among flocks to his will,
And dishonour the Cause of devotion.

The Altar and Throne
Are in danger alone
From such as himself, who would render
The Altar itself
But a step up to Pelf,
And pray God to pay his defender.

But, Doctor, one word
Which perhaps you have heard:
'He should never throw stones who has windows
Of Glass to be broken,
And by this same token
As a sinner, you can't care what Sin does.

'But perhaps you do well:
Your own windows, they tell,
Have long ago sufferèd censure;
Not a fragment remains
Of your character's panes,
Since the Regent refused you a glazier.

'Though your visions of lawn
Have all been withdrawn,
And you miss'd your bold stroke for a mitre;
In a very snug way
You may still preach and pray,
And from bishop sink into backbiter!'

[First published, 1831.]

LUCIETTA: A FRAGMENT

[First published in the Edition of 1904 from a manuscript in the possession of Mr. Murray.]

Lucietta, my deary,
That fairest of faces!
Is made up of kisses;
But, in love, oft the case is
Even stranger than this is —
There 's another, that 's slyer,
Who touches me nigher, —
A Witch, an intriguer,
Whose manner and figure
Now piques me, excites me,
Torments and delights me —
Cœtera desunt.

MARTIAL, LIB. I. EPIG. I.

Hic est, quem legis, ille, quem requiris,
Toto notus in orbe Martialis, etc.

He, unto whom thou art so partial,
Oh, reader! is the well-known Martial,
The Epigrammatist: while living,
Give him the fame thou wouldst be giving;
So shall he hear, and feel, and know it —
Post-obits rarely reach a poet.

THE CONQUEST

[This fragment was found amongst Lord Byron's papers, after his departure from Genoa for Greece.]

I

The Son of Love and Lord of War I sing;
Him who bade England bow to Normandy,
And left the name of conqueror more than king
To his unconquerable dynasty.
Not fann'd alone by Victory's fleeting wing,
He rear'd his bold and brilliant throne on high:
The Bastard kept, like lions, his prey fast,
And Britain's bravest victor was the last.

March 8-9, 1823.

IMPROMPTU

Beneath Blessington's eyes
The reclaim'd Paradise
Should be free as the former from evil;
But if the new Eve
For an Apple should grieve,
What mortal would not play the Devil?

April, 1823.

JOURNAL IN CEPHALONIA

[First published in the *Letters*, 1901.]

The dead have been awaken'd — shall I sleep?
The World's at war with tyrants — shall I crouch?
The harvest's ripe — and shall I pause to reap?
I slumber not; the thorn is in my Couch;
Each day a trumpet soundeth in mine ear,
Its echo in my heart —

June 19, 1823.

SONG TO THE SULIOTES

[First published in Edition of 1904 from a manuscript in possession of Mr. Murray.]

Up to battle! Sons of Suli
Up, and do your duty duly!
There the wall — and there the Moat is:
Bouwah! Bouwah! Suliotes!
There is booty — there is Beauty,
Up my boys and do your duty.

By the sally and the rally
Which defied the arms of Ali;
By your own dear native Highlands,
By your children in the islands,
Up and charge, my Stratiotes,
Bouwah! — Bouwah! — Suliotes!

As our ploughshare is the Sabre:
Here's the harvest of our labour;
For behind those batter'd breaches
Are our foes with all their riches:
There is Glory — there is plunder —
Then away despite of thunder!

SATIRES

[The seven Satires here grouped together represent work extending from Byron's twentieth to his thirty-sixth year, from the beginning, that is, to the end of his poetical career. Two distinct, and sometimes hostile, veins are to be noted in Byron's genius, — one romantic and lyrical, connecting him with the revolutionary poets of the day, the other satirical and neo-classic, deriving from the school of Queen Anne. In *Childe Harold* and the Tales the first vein is to be seen almost pure; in the Satires the second reigns practically unmixed; in *Don Juan* the two are inextricably blended, giving the real Byron, the full poet. — The history of the Satires is briefly as follows: As early as October, 1807, Byron had written a satirical poem which he called *British Bards.* This was printed in quarto sheets (but never published), one set of which is now in the British Museum. Lord Brougham's review of *Hours of Idleness* appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* of January, 1808. Spurred to revenge the scant courtesy shown him in that essay, Byron added to his satirical verses and published them anonymously as *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, in March, 1809. These began with the ninety-seventh line of the present poem. A second edition, to which he prefixed his name, followed in October of the same year, and a third and fourth were called for during his 'pilgrimage' in 1810 and 1811. On returning to England he revised the work for a fifth edition, which was actually printed when he suddenly resolved to suppress it. Several copies, however, escaped destruction, and from one of these the poem as it now appears in his Works derives. Byron often in later years regretted the indiscriminate sarcasm of this Satire, but the trick of flinging barbed arrows right and left he never forgot. Many of the judgments, though extravagant in expression as befits the Muse of Juvenal, are shrewdly penetrating. — *Hints from Horace* was always a favorite of the author's, but is little read to-day. It was, however, for various reasons not published in the author's lifetime, and was first included among his Works in the Murray edition of 1831. — *The Curse of Minerva* is dated by Byron himself, Athens, March 17, 1811. It was to be published, as was also *Hints from Horace*, in the volume with the fifth edition of the *Bards*, and Moore states that *The Curse of Minerva*, and with it necessarily the other two poems, was suppressed out of deference to Lord Elgin. It was, curiously enough, first published in Philadelphia in 1815. — Byron wrote *The Waltz* in 1812 and published it anonymously in the spring of the following year. It exhibits at once the indignation felt by many English folk at the introduction of this form of 'round dancing' from Germany, and more particularly, that almost morbid sense of modesty which Byron, like many another man of rakish habits, so often manifested in words throughout his life. — *The Blues*, 'a mere buffoonery,' as Byron calls it, was 'scribbled' at Ravenna, August 6, 1821, and is apparently a mere unprovoked effervescence of wit. It was published anonymously in Leigh Hunt's

Liberal of April 26, 1823.—Into the long quarrel between Southey, the reformed radical and obliging poet-laureate, and Byron, leader of the 'Satanic school,' there is neither space nor occasion here to enter. The result on Byron's side, notably the Dedication to *Don Juan* and *The Vision of Judgment*, was the writing of some of the most enjoyable satire ever penned. George III. died January 29, 1820; Southey's apotheosis of that monarch was published in April of the next year as *A Vision of Judgment*. The inexpressible flatness and absurdity of the hexameters which composed this poem cried out for ridicule, and Byron was ready. He sent the manuscript of his satire of the same name to Murray, October 4, 1821; Murray, however, cautiously refrained from printing, and the poem was first published in the *Liberal* of October 15, 1822.—*The Age of Bronze* was composed in December of 1822 and January of 1823, and three months later was published by John Hunt without the author's name. The poem contains a rapid survey of Napoleon's career, of the Congress of the Allied Powers at Verona, 1822, and the political difficulties of Great Britain of that year.]

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

A SATIRE

'I had rather be a kitten, and cry mew!
Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers.'
SHAKSPEARE.

'Such shameless bards we have; and yet 't is true,
There are as mad, abandon'd critics too.'
POPE.

PREFACE

All my friends, learned and unlearned, have urged me not to publish this Satire with my name. If I were to be 'turned from the career of my humour by quibbles quick, and paper bullets of the brain,' I should have complied with their counsel. But I am not to be terrified by abuse, or bullied by reviewers, with or without arms. I can safely say that I have attacked none personally, who did not commence on the offensive. An author's works are public property: he who purchases may judge, and publish his opinion if he pleases; and the authors I have endeavoured to commemorate may do by me as I have done by them. I dare say they will succeed better in condemning my scribblings, than in mending their own. But my object is not to prove that I can write well, but, if possible, to make others write better.

As the poem has met with far more success than I expected, I have endeavoured in this edition to make some additions and alterations, to render it more worthy of public perusal.

In the first edition of this satire, published anonymously, fourteen lines on the subject of Bowles's Pope were written by, and inserted at the request of, an ingenious friend of mine, who has now in the press a volume of poetry. In the present edition they are erased, and some of my own substituted in their stead, my only reason for this being that which I conceive would operate with any other person in the same manner,—a determination not to publish with my name any production, which was not entirely and exclusively my own composition.

With regard to the real talents of many of the poetical persons whose performances are mentioned or alluded to in the following pages, it is presumed by the author that there can be little difference of opinion in the public at large; though, like other sectaries, each has his separate tabernacle of proselytes, by whom his abilities are over-rated, his faults overlooked, and his metrical canons received without scruple and without consideration. But the unquestionable possession of considerable genius by several of the writers here censured renders their mental prostitution more to be regretted. Imbecility may be pitied, or, at worst, laughed at and forgotten; perverted powers demand the most decided reprehension. No one can wish more than the author that some known and able writer had undertaken their exposure; but Mr. Gifford has devoted himself to Massinger, and, in the absence of the regular physician, a country practitioner may, in cases of absolute necessity, be allowed to prescribe his nostrum to prevent the extension of so deplorable an epidemic, provided there be no quackery in his treatment of the malady. A caustic is here offered; as it is to be feared nothing short of actual cautery can recover the numerous patients afflicted with the present prevalent and distressing *rabies* for rhyming.—As to the Edinburgh Reviewers, it would indeed require an Hercules to crush the Hydra; but if the author succeeds in merely 'bruising one of the heads of the serpent,' though his own hand should suffer in the encounter, he will be amply satisfied.

STILL must I hear?—shall hoarse Fitzgerald bawl
His creaking couplets in a tavern hall,
And I not sing, lest, haply, Scotch reviews
Should dub me scribbler and denounce my muse?
Prepare for rhyme—I 'll publish, right or wrong:
Fools are my theme, let satire be my song.

Oh, nature's noblest gift, my grey goose-quill!
Slave of my thoughts, obedient to my will,
Torn from thy parent bird to form a pen,
That mighty instrument of little men!
The pen! foredoom'd to aid the mental throes
Of brains that labour, big with verse or prose,
Though nymphs forsake, and critics may deride,
The lover's solace and the author's pride.
What wits! what poets dost thou daily raise!
How frequent is thy use, how small thy praise,
Condemn'd at length to be forgotten quite,
With all the pages which 't was thine to write.
But thou, at least, mine own especial pen!
Once laid aside, but now assumed again,
Our task complete like Hamet's, shall be free;
Though spurn'd by others, yet beloved by me:
Then let us soar to-day; no common theme,
No eastern vision, no distemper'd dream
Inspires — our path, though full of thorns, is plain;
Smooth be the verse, and easy be the strain.

When Vice triumphant holds her sov'reign sway,
Obey'd by all who nought beside obey;
When Folly, frequent harbinger of crime,
Bedecks her cap with bells of every clime;
When knaves and fools combined o'er all prevail,
And weigh their justice in a golden scale;
E'en then the boldest start from public sneers,
Afraid of shame, unknown to other fears,
More darkly sin, by satire kept in awe,
And shrink from ridicule though not from law.

Such is the force of wit! but not belong
To me the arrows of satiric song;
The royal vices of our age demand
A keener weapon and a mightier hand.
Still there are follies, e'en for me to chase,
And yield at least amusement in the race.
Laugh when I laugh, I seek no other fame;
The cry is up, and scribblers are my game.
Speed, Pegasus! — ye strains of great and small,
Ode, epic, elegy, have at you all!
I too can scrawl, and once upon a time
I pour'd along the town a flood of rhyme,
A schoolboy freak, unworthy praise or blame;
I printed — older children do the same.
'T is pleasant, sure, to see one's name in print;
A book 's a book, although there 's nothing in 't.
Not that a title's sounding charm can save
Or scrawl or scribbler from an equal grave:
This Lambe must own, since his patrician name
Fail'd to preserve the spurious farce from shame.
No matter, George continues still to write,
Though now the name is veil'd from public sight.
Moved by the great example, I pursue
The self-same road, but make my own review:
Not seek great Jeffrey's, yet like him will be
Self-constituted judge of poesy.

A man must serve his time to ev'ry trade
Save censure — critics all are ready made.
Take hackney'd jokes from Miller, got by rote,
With just enough of learning to misquote;
A mind well skill'd to find or forge a fault;
A turn for punning, call it Attic salt;
To Jeffrey go, be silent and discreet,
His pay is just ten sterling pounds per sheet:
Fear not to lie, 't will seem a sharper hit;
Shrink not from blasphemy, 't will pass for wit;
Care not for feeling — pass your proper jest,
And stand a critic, hated yet caress'd.

And shall we own such judgment? no — as soon
Seek roses in December, ice in June;
Hope constancy in wind, or corn in chaff;
Believe a woman or an epitaph,
Or any other thing that 's false, before
You trust in critics, who themselves are sore;
Or yield one single thought to be misled
By Jeffrey's heart or Lambe's Bœotian head.

To these young tyrants, by themselves misplaced,
Combined usurpers on the throne of taste;
To these, when authors bend in humble awe,
And hail their voice as truth, their word as law —
While these are censors, 't would be sin to spare;
While such are critics, why should I forbear?
But yet, so near all modern worthies run,
'T is doubtful whom to seek, or whom to shun;
Nor know we when to spare, or where to strike,
Our bards and censors are so much alike.

Then should you ask me, why I venture o'er
The path which Pope and Gifford trod before;
If not yet sicken'd, you can still proceed:
Go on; my rhyme will tell you as you read.
'But hold!' exclaims a friend, 'here 's some neglect:
This, that, and t'other line seem incorrect.'
What then? the self-same blunder Pope has got,
And careless Dryden — 'Ay, but Pye has not:' —
Indeed! — 't is granted, faith! — but what care I?
Better to err with Pope than shine with Pye.

Time was, ere yet in these degenerate days
Ignoble themes obtain'd mistaken praise,
When sense and wit with poesy allied,
No fabled graces, flourish'd side by side;
From the same fount their inspiration drew,
And, rear'd by taste, bloom'd fairer as they grew.
Then, in this happy isle, a Pope's pure strain
Sought the rapt soul to charm, nor sought in vain;
A polish'd nation's praise aspired to claim,
And raised the people's, as the poet's fame.
Like him great Dryden pour'd the tide of song,
In stream less smooth, indeed, yet doubly strong.
Then Congreve's scenes could cheer, or Otway's melt —
For nature then an English audience felt.
But why these names, or greater still, retrace,
When all to feebler bards resign their place?
Yet to such times our lingering looks are cast,
When taste and reason with those times are past.
Now look around, and turn each trifling page,
Survey the precious works that please the age;
This truth at least let satire's self allow,
No dearth of bards can be complain'd of now.
The loaded press beneath her labour groans,
And printers' devils shake their weary bones;
While Southey's epics cram the creaking shelves,
And Little's lyrics shine in hot-press'd twelves.
Thus saith the preacher: 'Nought beneath the sun
Is new;' yet still from change to change we run:
What varied wonders tempt us as they pass!
The cow-pox, tractors, galvanism, and gas,
In turns appear, to make the vulgar stare,
Till the swoln bubble bursts — and all is air!
Nor less new schools of Poetry arise,
Where dull pretenders grapple for the prize:
O'er taste awhile these pseudo-bards prevail;
Each country book-club bows the knee to Baal,
And, hurling lawful genius from the throne,
Erects a shrine and idol of its own;
Some leaden calf — but whom it matters not,
From soaring Southey down to grovelling Stott.

Behold! in various throngs the scribbling crew,
For notice eager, pass in long review:
Each spurs his jaded Pegasus apace,
And rhyme and blank maintain an equal race;

Sonnets on sonnets crowd, and ode on ode;
And tales of terror jostle on the road;
Immeasurable measures move along;
For simpering folly loves a varied song, 150
To strange mysterious dulness still the friend,
Admires the strain she cannot comprehend.
Thus Lays of Minstrels — may they be the last! —
On half-strung harps whine mournful to the blast.
While mountain spirits prate to river sprites,
That dames may listen to the sound at nights;
And goblin brats, of Gilpin Horner's brood,
Decoy young border-nobles through the wood,
And skip at every step, Lord knows how high,
And frighten foolish babes, the Lord knows why; 160
While high-born ladies in their magic cell,
Forbidding knights to read who cannot spell,
Despatch a courier to a wizard's grave,
And fight with honest men to shield a knave.

Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
The golden-crested haughty Marmion,
Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
Not quite a felon, yet but half a knight,
The gibbet or the field prepared to grace;
A mighty mixture of the great and base.
And think'st thou, Scott! by vain conceit perchance, 171
On public taste to foist thy stale romance,
Though Murray with his Miller may combine
To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?
No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
Their bays are sere, their former laurels fade.
Let such forego the poet's sacred name,
Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame:
Still for stern Mammon may they toil in vain,
And sadly gaze on gold they cannot gain!
Such be their meed, such still the just reward 181
Of prostituted muse and hireling bard!
For this we spurn Apollo's venal son,
And bid a long 'good night to Marmion.'

These are the themes that claim our plaudits now;
These are the bards to whom the muse must bow;
While Milton, Dryden, Pope, alike forgot,
Resign their hallow'd bays to Walter Scott.

The time has been, when yet the muse was young,
When Homer swept the lyre, and Maro sung, 190
An epic scarce ten centuries could claim,
While awe-struck nations hail'd the magic name:
The work of each immortal bard appears
The single wonder of a thousand years.
Empires have moulder'd from the face of earth,
Tongues have expired with those who gave them birth,
Without the glory such a strain can give,
As even in ruin bids the language live.
Not so with us, though minor bards, content,
On one great work a life of labour spent:
With eagle pinion soaring to the skies, 201
Behold the ballad-monger Southey rise!
To him let Camoens, Milton, Tasso yield,
Whose annual strains, like armies, take the field.
First in the ranks see Joan of Arc advance,
The scourge of England and the boast of France!
Though burnt by wicked Bedford for a witch,
Behold her statue placed in glory's niche;
Her fetters burst, and just released from prison,
A virgin phœnix from her ashes risen. 210
Next see tremendous Thalaba come on,
Arabia's monstrous, wild, and wondrous son;
Domdaniel's dread destroyer, who o'erthrew
More mad magicians than the world e'er knew.
Immortal hero! all thy foes o'ercome,
For ever reign — the rival of Tom Thumb!
Since startled metre fled before thy face,
Well wert thou doom'd the last of all thy race!

Well might triumphant genii bear thee hence,
Illustrious conqueror of common sense!
Now, last and greatest, Madoc spreads his sails,
Cacique in Mexico, and prince in Wales;
Tells us strange tales, as other travellers do,
More old than Mandeville's, and not so true.
Oh, Southey! Southey! cease thy varied song!
A bard may chant too often and too long:
As thou art strong in verse, in mercy, spare!
A fourth, alas! were more than we could bear.
But if, in spite of all the world can say,
Thou still wilt verseward plod thy weary way;
If still in Berkley ballads most uncivil,
Thou wilt devote old women to the devil,
The babe unborn thy dread intent may rue:
'God help thee,' Southey, and thy readers too.

Next comes the dull disciple of thy school,
That mild apostate from poetic rule,
The simple Wordsworth, framer of a lay
As soft as evening in his favourite May,
Who warns his friend 'to shake off toil and trouble,
And quit his books, for fear of growing double;'
Who, both by precept and example, shows
That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose;
Convincing all, by demonstration plain,
Poetic souls delight in prose insane;
And Christmas stories tortured into rhyme
Contain the essence of the true sublime.
Thus, when he tells the tale of Betty Foy,
The idiot mother of 'an idiot boy;'
A moon-struck, silly lad, who lost his way,
And, like his bard, confounded night with day;
So close on each pathetic part he dwells,
And each adventure so sublimely tells,
That all who view the 'idiot in his glory'
Conceive the bard the hero of the story.

Shall gentle Coleridge pass unnoticed here,
To turgid ode and tumid stanza dear?
Though themes of innocence amuse him best,
Yet still obscurity 's a welcome guest.
If Inspiration should her aid refuse
To him who takes a pixy for a muse,
Yet none in lofty numbers can surpass
The bard who soars to elegise an ass.
So well the subject suits his noble mind,
He brays, the laureat of the long-ear'd kind.

Oh, wonder-working Lewis! monk, or bard,
Who fain wouldst make Parnassus a church-yard!
Lo! wreaths of yew, not laurel, bind thy brow,
Thy muse a sprite, Apollo's sexton thou!
Whether on ancient tombs thou takest thy stand,
By gibb'ring spectres hail'd, thy kindred band;
Or tracest chaste descriptions on thy page,
To please the females of our modest age;
All hail, M. P.! from whose infernal brain
Thin sheeted phantoms glide, a grisly train;
At whose command 'grim women' throng in crowds,
And kings of fire, of water, and of clouds,
With 'small grey men,' 'wild yagers,' and what not,
To crown with honour thee and Walter Scott.
Again all hail! if tales like thine may please,
St. Luke alone can vanquish the disease;
Even Satan's self with thee might dread to dwell,
And in thy skull discern a deeper hell.

Who in soft guise, surrounded by a choir
Of virgins melting, not to Vesta's fire,
With sparkling eyes, and cheek by passion flush'd,
Strikes his wild lyre, whilst listening dames are hush'd?
'T is Little! young Catullus of his day,
As sweet, but as immoral, in his lay!
Grieved to condemn, the muse must still be just,
Nor spare melodious advocates of lust.
Pure is the flame which o'er her altar burns;
From grosser incense with disgust she turns:
Yet kind to youth, this expiation o'er,
She bids thee 'mend thy line, and sin no more.'

For thee, translator of the tinsel song,
To whom such glittering ornaments belong,

Hibernian Strangford! with thine eyes of blue,
And boasted locks of red or auburn hue,
Whose plaintive strain each love-sick miss admires,
And o'er harmonious fustian half expires,
Learn, if thou canst, to yield thine author's sense,
Nor vend thy sonnets on a false pretence.
Think'st thou to gain thy verse a higher place,
By dressing Camoëns in a suit of lace?
Mend, Strangford! mend thy morals and thy taste;
Be warm, but pure; be amorous, but be chaste:
Cease to deceive; thy pilfer'd harp restore,
Nor teach the Lusian bard to copy Moore.

Behold! — ye tarts! one moment spare the text —
Hayley's last work, and worst — until his next;
Whether he spin poor couplets into plays,
Or damn the dead with purgatorial praise,
His style in youth or age is still the same,
For ever feeble and for ever tame.
Triumphant first see *Temper's Triumphs* shine!
At least I 'm sure they triumph'd over mine.
Of *Music's Triumphs*, all who read may swear
That luckless music never triumph'd there.

Moravians, rise! bestow some meet reward
On dull devotion — Lo! the Sabbath bard,
Sepulchral Grahame, pours his notes sublime
In mangled prose, nor e'en aspires to rhyme;
Breaks into blank the Gospel of St. Luke,
And boldly pilfers from the Pentateuch;
And, undisturb'd by conscientious qualms,
Perverts the Prophets, and purloins the Psalms.

Hail, Sympathy! thy soft idea brings
A thousand visions of a thousand things,
And shows, still whimpering through threescore of years,
The maudlin prince of mournful sonneteers.
And art thou not their prince, harmonious Bowles!
Thou first, great oracle of tender souls?
Whether thou sing'st with equal ease, and grief,
The fall of empires or a yellow leaf;
Whether thy muse most lamentably tells
What merry sounds proceed from Oxford bells,
Or, still in bells delighting, finds a friend
In every chime that jingled from Ostend;
Ah! how much juster were thy muse's hap,
If to thy bells thou wouldst but add a cap!
Delightful Bowles! still blessing and still blest,
All love thy strain, but children like it best.
'T is thine, with gentle Little's moral song,
To soothe the mania of the amorous throng!
With thee our nursery damsels shed their tears,
Ere miss as yet completes her infant years:
But in her teens thy whining powers are vain;
She quits poor Bowles for Little's purer strain.
Now to soft themes thou scornest to confine
The lofty numbers of a harp like thine;
'Awake a louder and a lofter strain,'
Such as none heard before, or will again!
Where all Discoveries jumbled from the flood,
Since first the leaky ark reposed in mud,
By more or less, are sung in every book,
From Captain Noah down to Captain Cook.
Nor this alone; but, pausing on the road,
The bard sighs forth a gentle episode;
And gravely tells — attend, each beauteous miss! —
When first Madeira trembled to a kiss.
Bowles! in thy memory let this precept dwell,
Stick to thy sonnets, man! — at least they sell.
But if some new-born whim, or larger bribe,
Prompt thy crude brain, and claim thee for a scribe;
If chance some bard, though once by dunces fear'd,
Now, prone in dust, can only be revered;
If Pope, whose fame and genius from the first
Have foil'd the best of critics, needs the worst,
Do thou essay: each fault, each failing scan;
The first of poets was, alas! but man.
Rake from each ancient dunghill ev'ry pearl,
Consult Lord Fanny, and confide in Curll;

Let all the scandals of a former age
Perch on thy pen, and flutter o'er thy page;
Affect a candour which thou canst not feel,
Clothe envy in the garb of honest zeal;
Write, as if St. John's soul could still inspire,
And do from hate what Mallet did for hire.
Oh! hadst thou lived in that congenial time,
To rave with Dennis, and with Ralph to rhyme;
Throng'd with the rest around his living head,
Not raised thy hoof against the lion dead;
A meet reward had crown'd thy glorious gains,
And link'd thee to the Dunciad for thy pains.

Another epic! Who inflicts again
More books of blank upon the sons of men?
Bœotian Cottle, rich Bristowa's boast,
Imports old stories from the Cambrian coast,
And sends his goods to market — all alive!
Lines forty thousand, cantos twenty-five!
Fresh fish from Hippocrene! who'll buy? who'll buy?
The precious bargain's cheap — in faith, not I.
Your turtle-feeder's verse must needs be flat,
Though Bristol bloat him with the verdant fat;
If Commerce fills the purse, she clogs the brain,
And Amos Cottle strikes the lyre in vain.
In him an author's luckless lot behold,
Condemn'd to make the books which once he sold.
Oh, Amos Cottle! — Phœbus! what a name
To fill the speaking trump of future fame! —
Oh, Amos Cottle! for a moment think
What meagre profits spring from pen and ink!
When thus devoted to poetic dreams,
Who will peruse thy prostituted reams?
Oh pen perverted! paper misapplied!
Had Cottle still adorn'd the counter's side,
Bent o'er the desk, or, born to useful toils,
Been taught to make the paper which he soils,
Plough'd, delved, or plied the oar with lusty limb,
He had not sung of Wales, nor I of him.

As Sisyphus against the infernal steep
Rolls the huge rock whose motions ne'er may sleep,
So up thy hill, ambrosial Richmond, heaves
Dull Maurice all his granite weight of leaves:
Smooth, solid monuments of mental pain!
The petrifactions of a plodding brain,
That, ere they reach the top, fall lumbering back again.

With broken lyre and cheek serenely pale,
Lo! sad Alcæus wanders down the vale;
Though fair they rose, and might have bloom'd at last,
His hopes have perish'd by the northern blast:
Nipp'd in the bud by Caledonian gales,
His blossoms wither as the blast prevails!
O'er his lost works let *classic* Sheffield weep;
May no rude hand disturb their early sleep!

Yet say! why should the bard at once resign
His claim to favour from the sacred Nine?
For ever startled by the mingled howl
Of northern wolves, that still in darkness prowl;
A coward brood, which mangle as they prey,
By hellish instinct, all that cross their way;
Aged or young, the living or the dead,
No mercy find — these harpies must be fed.
Why do the injured unresisting yield
The calm possession of their native field?
Why tamely thus before their fangs retreat,
Nor hunt the bloodhounds back to Arthur's Seat?

Health to immortal Jeffrey! once, in name,
England could boast a judge almost the same;
In soul so like, so merciful, yet just,
Some think that Satan has resign'd his trust,
And given the spirit to the world again,
To sentence letters, as he sentenced men.
With hand less mighty, but with heart as black,
With voice as willing to decree the rack;
Bred in the courts betimes, though all that law
As yet hath taught him is to find a flaw;

Since well instructed in the patriot school
To rail at party, though a party tool —
Who knows, if chance his patrons should restore
Back to the sway they forfeited before,
His scribbling toils some recompense may meet,
And raise this Daniel to the judgment-seat?
Let Jeffries' shade indulge the pious hope,
And greeting thus, present him with a rope:
'Heir to my virtues! man of equal mind!
Skill'd to condemn as to traduce mankind,
This cord receive, for thee reserved with care,
To wield in judgment, and at length to wear.'

Health to great Jeffrey! Heaven preserve his life
To flourish on the fertile shores of Fife,
And guard it sacred in its future wars,
Since authors sometimes seek the field of Mars!
Can none remember that eventful day,
That ever glorious, almost fatal fray,
When Little's leadless pistol met his eye,
And Bow-street myrmidons stood laughing by?
Oh, day disastrous! On her firm-set rock,
Dunedin's castle felt a secret shock;
Dark roll'd the sympathetic waves of Forth,
Low groan'd the startled whirlwinds of the north;
Tweed ruffled half his waves to form a tear,
The other half pursued its calm career;
Arthur's steep summit nodded to its base,
The surly Tolbooth scarcely kept her place.
The Tolbooth felt — for marble sometimes can,
On such occasions, feel as much as man —
The Tolbooth felt defrauded of his charms,
If Jeffrey died, except within her arms.
Nay last, not least, on that portentous morn,
The sixteenth story, where himself was born,
His patrimonial garret, fell to ground,
And pale Edina shudder'd at the sound.
Strew'd were the streets around with milk-white reams,
Flow'd all the Canongate with inky streams;
This of his candour seem'd the sable dew,
That of his valour show'd the bloodless hue;
And all with justice deem'd the two combined
The mingled emblems of his mighty mind.
But Caledonia's goddess hover'd o'er
The field, and saved him from the wrath of Moore;
From either pistol snatch'd the vengeful lead,
And straight restored it to her favourite's head;
That head, with greater than magnetic pow'r,
Caught it, as Danaë caught the golden show'r,
And, though the thickening dross will scarce refine,
Augments its ore, and is itself a mine.
'My son,' she cried, 'ne'er thirst for gore again,
Resign the pistol and resume the pen;
O'er politics and poesy preside,
Boast of thy country and Britannia's guide!
For long as Albion's heedless sons submit,
Or Scottish taste decides on English wit,
So long shall last thine unmolested reign,
Nor any dare to take thy name in vain.
Behold, a chosen band shall aid thy plan,
And own thee chieftain of the critic clan.
First in the oat-fed phalanx shall be seen
The travell'd thane, Athenian Aberdeen.
Herbert shall wield Thor's hammer, and sometimes,
In gratitude, thou 'lt praise his rugged rhymes.
Smug Sydney too thy bitter page shall seek,
And classic Hallam, much renown'd for Greek;
Scott may perchance his name and influence lend,
And paltry Pillans shall traduce his friend;
While gay Thalia's luckless votary, Lambe,
Damn'd like the devil, devil-like will damn.
Known be thy name, unbounded be thy sway!
Thy Holland's banquets shall each toil repay;
While grateful Britain yields the praise she owes
To Holland's hirelings and to learning's foes.
Yet mark one caution ere thy next Review
Spread its light wings of saffron and of blue,
Beware lest blundering Brougham destroy the sale,
Turn beef to bannocks, cauliflowers to kail.'
Thus having said, the kilted goddess kist
Her son, and vanish'd in a Scottish mist

Then prosper, Jeffrey! pertest of the train
Whom Scotland pampers with her fiery grain!
Whatever blessing waits a genuine Scot,
In double portion swells thy glorious lot;
For thee Edina culls her evening sweets,
And showers their odours on thy candid sheets,
Whose hue and fragrance to thy work adhere —
This scents its pages, and that gilds its rear.
Lo! blushing Itch, coy nymph, enamour'd grown,
Forsakes the rest, and cleaves to thee alone;
And, too unjust to other Pictish men,
Enjoys thy person, and inspires thy pen!

Illustrious Holland! hard would be his lot,
His hirelings mention'd, and himself forgot!
Holland, with Henry Petty at his back,
The whipper-in and huntsman of the pack.
Blest be the banquets spread at Holland House,
Where Scotchmen feed, and critics may carouse!
Long, long beneath that hospitable roof
Shall Grub-street dine, while duns are kept aloof.
See honest Hallam lay aside his fork,
Resume his pen, review his Lordship's work,
And, grateful for the dainties on his plate,
Declare his landlord can at least translate!
Dunedin! view thy children with delight,
They write for food — and feed because they write.
And lest, when heated with the unusual grape,
Some glowing thoughts should to the press escape,
And tinge with red the female reader's cheek,
My lady skims the cream of each critique;
Breathes o'er the page her purity of soul,
Reforms each error, and refines the whole.

Now to the Drama turn — Oh! motley sight!
What precious scenes the wondering eyes invite!
Puns, and a prince within a barrel pent,
And Dibdin's nonsense yield complete content.
Though now, thank Heaven! the Rosciomania's o'er,
And full-grown actors are endured once more;
Yet what avail their vain attempts to please,
While British critics suffer scenes like these;
While Reynolds vents his 'dammes!' 'poohs!' and 'zounds!'
And common-place and common sense confounds?
While Kenney's *World* — ah! where is Kenney's wit? —
Tires the sad gallery, lulls the listless pit;
And Beaumont's pilfer'd Caratach affords
A tragedy complete in all but words?
Who but must mourn, while these are all the rage,
The degradation of our vaunted stage!
Heavens! is all sense of shame and talent gone?
Have we no living bard of merit? — none!
Awake, George Colman! Cumberland, awake!
Ring the alarum bell! let folly quake!
Oh, Sheridan! if aught can move thy pen,
Let Comedy assume her throne again;
Abjure the mummery of the German schools;
Leave new Pizarros to translating fools;
Give, as thy last memorial to the age,
One classic drama, and reform the stage.
Gods! o'er those boards shall Folly rear her head,
Where Garrick trod, and Siddons lives to tread?
On those shall Farce display Buffoon'ry's mask,
And Hook conceal his heroes in a cask?
Shall sapient managers new scenes produce
From Cherry, Skeffington, and Mother Goose?
While Shakspeare, Otway, Massinger, forgot,
On stalls must moulder, or in closets rot?
Lo! with what pomp the daily prints proclaim
The rival candidates for Attic fame!
In grim array though Lewis' spectres rise,
Still Skeffington and Goose divide the prize.
And sure *great* Skeffington must claim our praise,
For skirtless coats and skeletons of plays

Renown'd alike; whose genius ne'er confines
Her flight to garnish Greenwood's gay designs;
Nor sleeps with *Sleeping Beauties*, but anon
In five facetious acts comes thundering on,
While poor John Bull, bewilder'd with the scene,
Stares, wondering what the devil it can mean;
But as some hands applaud, a venal few!
Rather than sleep, why John applauds it too.

Such are we now. Ah! wherefore should we turn
To what our fathers were, unless to mourn?
Degenerate Britons! are ye dead to shame,
Or, kind to dulness, do you fear to blame?
Well may the nobles of our present race
Watch each distortion of a Naldi's face;
Well may they smile on Italy's buffoons,
And worship Catalani's pantaloons,
Since their own drama yields no fairer trace
Of wit than puns, of humour than grimace.

Then let Ausonia, skill'd in every art
To soften manners, but corrupt the heart,
Pour her exotic follies o'er the town,
To sanction Vice, and hunt Decorum down.
Let wedded strumpets languish o'er Deshayes,
And bless the promise which his form displays;
While Gayton bounds before th' enraptured looks
Of hoary marquises and stripling dukes.
Let high-born lechers eye the lively Prêsle
Twirl her light limbs, that spurn the needless veil;
Let Angiolini bare her breast of snow,
Wave the white arm, and point the pliant toe;
Collini trill her love-inspiring song,
Strain her fair neck, and charm the listening throng!
Whet not your scythe, suppressors of our vice!
Reforming saints! too delicately nice!
By whose decrees, our sinful souls to save,
No Sunday tankards foam, no barbers shave;
And beer undrawn, and beards unmown, display
Your holy reverence for the Sabbath-day.

Or hail at once the patron and the pile
Of vice and folly, Greville and Argyle!
Where yon proud palace, Fashion's hallow'd fane,
Spreads wide her portals for the motley train,
Behold the new Petronius of the day,
Our arbiter of pleasure and of play!
There the hired eunuch, the Hesperian choir,
The melting lute, the soft lascivious lyre,
The song from Italy, the step from France,
The midnight orgy, and the mazy dance,
The smile of beauty, and the flush of wine,
For fops, fools, gamesters, knaves, and lords combine:
Each to his humour — Comus all allows;
Champaign, dice, music, or your neighbour's spouse.
Talk not to us, ye starving sons of trade!
Of piteous ruin which ourselves have made;
In Plenty's sunshine Fortune's minions bask,
Nor think of poverty, except 'en masque,'
When for the night some lately titled ass
Appears the beggar which his grandsire was.
The curtain dropp'd, the gay burletta o'er,
The audience take their turn upon the floor;
Now round the room the circling dow'gers sweep,
Now in loose waltz the thin-clad daughters leap;
The first in lengthen'd line majestic swim,
The last display the free unfetter'd limb!
Those for Hibernia's lusty sons repair
With art the charms which nature could not spare;
These after husbands wing their eager flight,
Nor leave much mystery for the nuptial night.

Oh! blest retreats of infamy and ease,
Where, all forgotten but the power to please,
Each maid may give a loose to genial thought,
Each swain may teach new systems, or be taught.
There the blithe youngster, just return'd from Spain,
Cuts the light pack, or calls the rattling main;

The jovial caster 's set, and seven 's the nick,
Or — done ! — a thousand on the coming trick !
If, mad with loss, existence 'gins to tire,
And all your hope or wish is to expire,
Here 's Powell's pistol ready for your life,
And, kinder still, two Pagets for your wife;
Fit consummation of an earthly race
Begun in folly, ended in disgrace;
While none but menials o'er the bed of death,
Wash thy red wounds, or watch thy wavering breath;
Traduced by liars, and forgot by all,
The mangled victim of a drunken brawl,
To live like Clodius and like Falkland fall.

Truth ! rouse some genuine bard, and guide his hand
To drive this pestilence from out the land.
E'en I — least thinking of a thoughtless throng,
Just skill'd to know the right and choose the wrong,
Freed at that age when reason's shield is lost,
To fight my course through passion's countless host,
Whom every path of pleasure's flow'ry way
Has lured in turn, and all have led astray —
E'en I must raise my voice, e'en I must feel
Such scenes, such men, destroy the public weal;
Although some kind, censorious friend will say,
'What art thou better, meddling fool, than they ?'
And every brother rake will smile to see
That miracle, a moralist in me.
No matter — when some bard in virtue strong,
Gifford perchance, shall raise the chastening song,
Then sleep my pen for ever ! and my voice
Be only heard to hail him, and rejoice;
Rejoice, and yield my feeble praise, though I
May feel the lash that Virtue must apply.

As for the smaller fry, who swarm in shoals
From silly Hafiz up to simple Bowles,
Why should we call them from their dark abode,
In broad St. Giles's or in Tottenham-road ?
Or (since some men of fashion nobly dare
To scrawl in verse) from Bond-street or the Square ?
If things of ton their harmless lays indite,
Most wisely doom'd to shun the public sight,
What harm ? In spite of every critic elf,
Sir T. may read his stanzas to himself;
Miles Andrews still his strength in couplets try,
And live in prologues, though his dramas die.
Lords too are bards, such things at times befall,
And 't is some praise in peers to write at all.
Yet, did or taste or reason sway the times,
Ah ! who would take their titles with their rhymes ?
Roscommon ! Sheffield ! with your spirits fled,
No future laurels deck a noble head;
No muse will cheer, with renovating smile,
The paralytic puling of Carlisle.
The puny schoolboy and his early lay
Men pardon, if his follies pass away;
But who forgives the senior's ceaseless verse,
Whose hairs grow hoary as his rhymes grow worse !
What heterogeneous honours deck the peer !
Lord, rhymester, petit-maître, pamphleteer !
So dull in youth, so drivelling in his age,
His scenes alone had damn'd our sinking stage;
But managers for once cried, 'Hold, enough !'
Nor drugg'd their audience with the tragic stuff.
Yet at their judgment let his lordship laugh,
And case his volumes in congenial calf:
Yes ! doff that covering, where morocco shines,
And hang a calf-skin on those recreant lines.

With you, ye Druids ! rich in native lead,
Who daily scribble for your daily bread;
With you I war not: Gifford's heavy hand
Has crush'd, without remorse, your numerous band.
On 'all the talents' vent your venal spleen;
Want is your plea, let pity be your screen.

Let monodies on Fox regale your crew,
And Melville's Mantle prove a blanket too!
One common Lethe waits each hapless bard,
And, peace be with you! 't is your best reward.
Such damning fame as Dunciads only give
Could bid your lines beyond a morning live;
But now at once your fleeting labours close,
With names of greater note in blest repose.
Far be 't from me unkindly to upbraid
The lovely Rosa's prose in masquerade,
Whose strains, the faithful echoes of her mind,
Leave wondering comprehension far behind.
Though Crusca's bards no more our journals fill,
Some stragglers skirmish round the columns still;
Last of the howling host which once was Bell's,
Matilda snivels yet, and Hafiz yells;
And Merry's metaphors appear anew,
Chain'd to the signature of O. P. Q.

When some brisk youth, the tenant of a stall,
Employs a pen less pointed than his awl,
Leaves his snug shop, forsakes his store of shoes,
St. Crispin quits, and cobbles for the muse,
Heavens! how the vulgar stare! how crowds applaud!
How ladies read, and literati laud!
If chance some wicked wag should pass his jest,
'T is sheer ill-nature — don't the world know best?
Genius must guide when wits admire the rhyme,
And Capel Lofft declares 't is quite sublime.
Hear, then, ye happy sons of needless trade!
Swains! quit the plough, resign the useless spade!
Lo! Burns and Bloomfield, nay, a greater far,
Gifford was born beneath an adverse star,
Forsook the labours of a servile state,
Stemm'd the rude storm, and triumph'd over fate:
Then why no more? if Phœbus smiled on you,
Bloomfield! why not on brother Nathan too?
Him too the mania, not the muse, has seized;
Not inspiration, but a mind diseased:
And now no boor can seek his last abode,
No common be enclosed without an ode.
Oh! since increased refinement deigns to smile
On Britain's sons and bless our genial isle,
Let poesy go forth, pervade the whole,
Alike the rustic and mechanic soul!
Ye tuneful cobblers! still your notes prolong,
Compose at once a slipper and a song;
So shall the fair your handywork peruse,
Your sonnets sure shall please — perhaps your shoes.
May Moorland weavers boast Pindaric skill,
And tailors' lays be longer than their bill!
While punctual beaux reward the grateful notes,
And pay for poems — when they pay for coats.

To the famed throng now paid the tribute due,
Neglected genius! let me turn to you.
Come forth, oh Campbell! give thy talents scope;
Who dares aspire if thou must cease to hope?
And thou, melodious Rogers! rise at last,
Recall the pleasing memory of the past;
Arise! let blest remembrance still inspire,
And strike to wonted tones thy hallow'd lyre;
Restore Apollo to his vacant throne,
Assert thy country's honour and thine own.
What! must deserted Poesy still weep
Where her last hopes with pious Cowper sleep?
Unless, perchance, from his cold bier she turns,
To deck the turf that wraps her minstrel, Burns!
No! though contempt hath mark'd the spurious brood,
The race who rhyme from folly, or for food,
Yet still some genuine sons 't is hers to boast,
Who, least affecting, still affect the most:

Feel as they write, and write but as they feel —
Bear witness Gifford, Sotheby, Macneil.

'Why slumbers Gifford?' once was ask'd in vain;
Why slumbers Gifford? let us ask again.
Are there no follies for his pen to purge?
Are there no fools whose backs demand the scourge?
Are there no sins for satire's bard to greet?
Stalks not gigantic Vice in every street?
Shall peers or princes tread pollution's path,
And 'scape alike the law's and muse's wrath?
Nor blaze with guilty glare through future time,
Eternal beacons of consummate crime?
Arouse thee, Gifford! be thy promise claim'd,
Make bad men better, or at least ashamed.

Unhappy White! while life was in its spring,
And thy young muse just waved her joyous wing,
The spoiler swept that soaring lyre away,
Which else had sounded an immortal lay.
Oh! what a noble heart was here undone,
When Science' self destroy'd her favourite son!
Yes, she too much indulged thy fond pursuit,
She sow'd the seeds, but death has reap'd the fruit.
'T was thine own genius gave the final blow,
And help'd to plant the wound that laid thee low:
So the struck eagle, stretch'd upon the plain,
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,
View'd his own feather on the fatal dart,
And wing'd the shaft that quiver'd in his heart;
Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel
He nursed the pinion which impell'd the steel;
While the same plumage that had warm'd his nest
Drank the last life-drop of his bleeding breast.

There be who say, in these enlighten'd days,
That splendid lies are all the poet's praise:
That strain'd invention, ever on the wing,
Alone impels the modern bard to sing.
'T is true, that all who rhyme — nay, all who write,
Shrink from that fatal word to genius — trite;
Yet Truth sometimes will lend her noblest fires,
And decorate the verse herself inspires:
This fact in Virtue's name let Crabbe attest;
Though nature's sternest painter, yet the best.

And here let Shee and Genius find a place,
Whose pen and pencil yield an equal grace;
To guide whose hand the sister arts combine,
And trace the poet's or the painter's line;
Whose magic touch can bid the canvass glow,
Or pour the easy rhyme's harmonious flow;
While honours, doubly merited, attend
The poet's rival, but the painter's friend.

Blest is the man who dares approach the bower
Where dwelt the muses at their natal hour;
Whose steps have press'd, whose eye has mark'd afar,
The clime that nursed the sons of song and war,
The scenes which glory still must hover o'er,
Her place of birth, her own Achaian shore.
But doubly blest is he whose heart expands
With hallow'd feelings for those classic lands;
Who rends the veil of ages long gone by,
And views their remnants with a poet's eye!
Wright! 't was thy happy lot at once to view
Those shores of glory, and to sing them too;
And sure no common muse inspired thy pen
To hail the land of gods and godlike men.

And you, associate bards! who snatch'd to light
Those gems too long withheld from modern sight;

Whose mingling taste combined to cull the wreath
Where Attic flowers Aonian odours breathe,
And all their renovated fragrance flung,
To grace the beauties of your native tongue;
Now let those minds, that nobly could transfuse
The glorious spirit of the Grecian muse,
Though soft the echo, scorn a borrow'd tone:
Resign Achaia's lyre, and strike your own.

Let these, or such as these, with just applause,
Restore the muse's violated laws;
But not in flimsy Darwin's pompous chime,
That mighty master of unmeaning rhyme,
Whose gilded cymbals, more adorn'd than clear,
The eye delighted, but fatigued the ear;
In show the simple lyre could once surpass,
But now, worn down, appear in native brass;
While all his train of hovering sylphs around
Evaporate in similes and sound:
Him let them shun, with him let tinsel die:
False glare attracts, but more offends the eye.

Yet let them not to vulgar Wordsworth stoop,
The meanest object of the lowly group,
Whose verse, of all but childish prattle void,
Seems blessed harmony to Lamb and Lloyd.
Let them — but hold, my muse, nor dare to teach
A strain far, far beyond thy humble reach:
The native genius with their being given
Will point the path, and peal their notes to heaven.

And thou, too, Scott! resign to minstrels rude
The wilder slogan of a border feud:
Let others spin their meagre lines for hire;
Enough for genius if itself inspire!
Let Southey sing, although his teeming muse,
Prolific every spring, be too profuse;
Let simple Wordsworth chime his childish verse,
And brother Coleridge lull the babe at nurse;
Let spectre-mongering Lewis aim, at most,
To rouse the galleries, or to raise a ghost;
Let Moore still sigh; let Strangford steal from Moore,
And swear that Camoëns sang such notes of yore;
Let Hayley hobble on, Montgomery rave,
And godly Grahame chant a stupid stave;
Let sonneteering Bowles his strains refine,
And whine and whimper to the fourteenth line;
Let Stott, Carlisle, Matilda, and the rest
Of Grub-street, and of Grosvenor-place the best,
Scrawl on, till death release us from the strain,
Or Common Sense assert her rights again.
But thou, with powers that mock the aid of praise,
Shouldst leave to humbler bards ignoble lays:
Thy country's voice, the voice of all the nine,
Demand a hallow'd harp — that harp is thine.
Say! will not Caledonia's annals yield
The glorious record of some nobler field
Than the vile foray of a plundering clan,
Whose proudest deeds disgrace the name of man?
Or Marmion's acts of darkness, fitter food
For Sherwood's outlaw tales of Robin Hood?
Scotland! still proudly claim thy native bard,
And be thy praise his first, his best reward!
Yet not with thee alone his name should live,
But own the vast renown a world can give;
Be known, perchance, when Albion is no more,
And tell the tale of what she was before;
To future times her faded fame recall,
And save her glory, though his country fall.

Yet what avails the sanguine poet's hope,
To conquer ages, and with time to cope?
New eras spread their wings, new nations rise,
And other victors fill the applauding skies;
A few brief generations fleet along,
Whose sons forget the poet and his song:
E'en now, what once-loved minstrels scarce may claim
The transient mention of a dubious name!
When fame's loud trump hath blown its noblest blast,
Though long the sound, the echo sleeps at last;

And glory, like the phœnix 'midst her fires,
Exhales her odours, blazes, and expires.

Shall hoary Granta call her sable sons,
Expert in science, more expert at puns?
Shall these approach the muse? ah, no! she flies,
Even from the tempting ore of Seaton's prize;
Though printers condescend the press to soil
With rhyme by Hoare, and epic blank by Hoyle:
Not him whose page, if still upheld by whist,
Requires no sacred theme to bid us list.
Ye! who in Granta's honours would surpass,
Must mount her Pegasus, a full-grown ass;
A foal well worthy of her ancient dam,
Whose Helicon is duller than her Cam.

There Clarke, still striving piteously 'to please,'
Forgetting doggerel leads not to degrees,
A would-be satirist, a hired buffoon,
A monthly scribbler of some low lampoon,
Condemn'd to drudge, the meanest of the mean,
And furbish falsehoods for a magazine,
Devotes to scandal his congenial mind;
Himself a living libel on mankind.

Oh! dark asylum of a Vandal race,
At once the boast of learning, and disgrace!
So lost to Phœbus, that nor Hodgson's verse
Can make thee better, nor poor Hewson's worse.
But where fair Isis rolls her purer wave,
The partial muse delighted loves to lave;
On her green banks a greener wreath she wove,
To crown the bards that haunt her classic grove;
Where Richards wakes a genuine poet's fires,
And modern Britons glory in their sires.

For me, who, thus unask'd, have dared to tell
My country, what her sons should know too well,
Zeal for her honour bade me here engage
The host of idiots that infest her age;
No just applause her honour'd name shall lose,
As first in freedom, dearest to the muse.
Oh! would thy bards but emulate thy fame,
And rise more worthy, Albion, of thy name!
What Athens was in science, Rome in power,
What Tyre appear'd in her meridian hour,
'T is thine at once, fair Albion! to have been —
Earth's chief dictatress, ocean's lovely queen.
But Rome decay'd, and Athens strew'd the plain,
And Tyre's proud piers lie shatter'd in the main;
Like these, thy strength may sink, in ruin hurl'd,
And Britain fall, the bulwark of the world.
But let me cease, and dread Cassandra's fate,
With warning ever scoff'd at, till too late;
To themes less lofty still my lay confine,
And urge thy bards to gain a name like thine.

Then, hapless Britain! be thy rulers blest,
The senate's oracles, the people's jest!
Still hear thy motley orators dispense
The flowers of rhetoric, though not of sense,
While Canning's colleagues hate him for his wit,
And old dame Portland fills the place of Pitt.

Yet once again, adieu! ere this the sail
That wafts me hence is shivering in the gale;
And Afric's coast and Calpe's adverse height,
And Stamboul's minarets must greet my sight:
Thence shall I stray through beauty's native clime,
Where Kaff is clad in rocks and crown'd with snows sublime.
But should I back return, no tempting press
Shall drag my journal from the desk's recess.
Let coxcombs, printing as they come from far,
Snatch his own wreath of ridicule from Carr;

Let Aberdeen and Elgin still pursue
The shade of fame through regions of virtù;
Waste useless thousands on their Phidian freaks,
Misshapen monuments and maim'd antiques;
And make their grand saloons a general mart
For all the mutilated blocks of art:
Of Dardan tours let dilettanti tell,
I leave topography to rapid Gell;
And, quite content, no more shall interpose
To stun the public ear — at least with prose.

Thus far I 've held my undisturb'd career,
Prepared for rancour, steel'd 'gainst selfish fear.
This thing of rhyme I ne'er disdain'd to own —
Though not obtrusive, yet not quite unknown:
My voice was heard again, though not so loud,
My page, though nameless, never disavow'd;
And now at once I tear the veil away: —
Cheer on the pack! the quarry stands at bay,
Unscared by all the din of Melbourne house,
By Lambe's resentment, or by Holland's spouse,
By Jeffrey's harmless pistol, Hallam's rage,
Edina's brawny sons and brimstone page.
Our men in buckram shall have blows enough,
And feel they too are 'penetrable stuff:'
And though I hope not thence unscathed to go,
Who conquers me shall find a stubborn foe.
The time hath been, when no harsh sound would fall
From lips that now may seem imbued with gall;
Nor fools nor follies tempt me to despise
The meanest thing that crawl'd beneath my eyes:
But now, so callous grown, so changed since youth,
I 've learn'd to think and sternly speak the truth;
Learn'd to deride the critic's starch decree,
And break him on the wheel he meant for me;
To spurn the rod a scribbler bids me kiss,
Nor care if courts and crowds applaud or hiss:
Nay more, though all my rival rhymesters frown,
I too can hunt a poetaster down;
And, arm'd in proof, the gauntlet cast at once
To Scotch marauder and to southern dunce.
Thus much I 've dared; if my incondite lay
Hath wrong'd these righteous times, let others say:
This, let the world, which knows not how to spare
Yet rarely blames unjustly, now declare.

HINTS FROM HORACE

BEING AN ALLUSION IN ENGLISH VERSE TO THE EPISTLE 'AD PISONES, DE ARTE POETICA,' AND INTENDED AS A SEQUEL TO 'ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS'

> —— Ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum
> Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exsors ipsa secandi.
> HOR. *De Arte Poet.* [vv. 304, 305].

> 'Rhymes are difficult things — they are stubborn things, sir.'
> FIELDING'S *Amelia.*

ATHENS: CAPUCHIN CONVENT, *March* 12, 1811.

WHO would not laugh, if Lawrence, hired to grace
His costly canvass with each flatter'd face,
Abused his art, till Nature, with a blush,
Saw cits grow centaurs underneath his brush?
Or, should some limner join, for show or sale,
A maid of honour to a mermaid's tail?
Or low Dubost — as once the world has seen —
Degrade God's creatures in his graphic spleen?
Not all that forced politeness, which defends
Fools in their faults, could gag his grinning friends.
Believe me, Moschus, like that picture seems
The book which, sillier than a sick man's dreams,
Displays a crowd of figures incomplete,
Poetic nightmares, without head or feet.

Poets and painters, as all artists know,
May shoot a little with a lengthen'd bow;
We claim this mutual mercy for our task,
And grant in turn the pardon which we ask;
But make not monsters spring from gentle dams —
Birds breed not vipers, tigers nurse not lambs.

A labour'd, long exordium sometimes tends
(Like patriot speeches) but to paltry ends;
And nonsense in a lofty note goes down,
As pertness passes with a legal gown.
Thus many a bard describes in pompous strain
The clear brook babbling through the goodly plain;
The groves of Granta, and her Gothic halls,
King's Coll., Cam's stream, stain'd windows, and old walls;
Or, in adventurous numbers, neatly aims
To paint a rainbow, or — the river Thames.

You sketch a tree, and so perhaps may shine —
But daub a shipwreck like an alehouse sign;
You plan a *vase* — it dwindles to a *pot;*
Then glide down Grub-street — fasting and forgot;
Laugh'd into Lethe by some quaint Review,
Whose wit is never troublesome till — true.

In fine, to whatsoever you aspire,
Let it at least be simple and entire.

The greater portion of the rhyming tribe
(Give ear, my friend, for thou hast been a scribe)
Are led astray by some peculiar lure.
I labour to be brief — become obscure;
One falls while following elegance too fast;
Another soars, inflated with bombast;
Too low a third crawls on, afraid to fly,
He spins his subject to satiety;
Absurdly varying, he at last engraves
Fish in the woods, and boars beneath the waves!

Unless your care 's exact, your judgment nice,
The flight from folly leads but into vice;
None are complete, all wanting in some part,
Like certain tailors, limited in art.
For galligaskins Slowshears is your man,
But coats must claim another artisan.
Now this to me, I own, seems much the same
As Vulcan's feet to bear Apollo's frame;
Or, with a fair complexion, to expose
Black eyes, black ringlets, but — a bottle nose!

Dear authors! suit your topics to your strength,
And ponder well your subject and its length;
Nor lift your load, before you 're quite aware
What weight your shoulders will, or will not, bear.
But lucid Order and Wit's siren voice
Await the poet, skilful in his choice;
With native eloquence he soars along,
Grace in his thoughts, and music in his song.

Let judgment teach him wisely to combine
With future parts the now omitted line:
This shall the author choose, or that reject,
Precise in style, and cautious to select;
Nor slight applause will candid pens afford
To him who furnishes a wanting word.
Then fear not, if 't is needful, to produce
Some term unknown or obsolete in use
(As Pitt has furnish'd us a word or two,
Which lexicographers declined to do);
So you indeed, with care (but be content
To take this license rarely), — may invent.
New words find credit in these latter days,
If neatly grafted on a Gallic phrase;
What Chaucer, Spenser did, we scarce refuse
To Dryden's or to Pope's maturer muse.
If you can add a little, say why not,
As well as William Pitt and Walter Scott?
Since they, by force of rhyme and force of lungs,
Enrich'd our island's ill-united tongues;
'T is then — and shall be — lawful to present
Reform in writing, as in parliament.

As forests shed their foliage by degrees,
So fade expressions which in season please;

And we and ours, alas! are due to fate,
And works and words but dwindle to a date.
Though as a monarch nods, and commerce calls,
Impetuous rivers stagnate in canals;
Though swamps subdued, and marshes drain'd, sustain
The heavy ploughshare and the yellow grain,
And rising ports along the busy shore
Protect the vessel from old Ocean's roar,
All, all must perish; but, surviving last,
The love of letters half preserves the past.
True, some decay, yet not a few revive;
Though those shall sink, which now appear to thrive,
As custom arbitrates, whose shifting sway
Our life and language must alike obey.

The immortal wars which gods and angels wage,
Are they not shown in Milton's sacred page?
His strain will teach what numbers best belong
To themes celestial told in epic song.

The slow, sad stanza will correctly paint
The lover's anguish or the friend's complaint.
But which deserves the laurel, rhyme or blank?
Which holds on Helicon the higher rank?
Let squabbling critics by themselves dispute
This point, as puzzling as a Chancery suit.

Satiric rhyme first sprang from selfish spleen.
You doubt — see Dryden, Pope, St. Patrick's dean.

Blank verse is now, with one consent, allied
To Tragedy and rarely quits her side.
Though mad Almanzor rhymed in Dryden's days,
No sing-song hero rants in modern plays;
Whilst modest Comedy her verse foregoes
For jest and *pun* in very middling prose.
Not that our Bens or Beaumonts show the worse,
Or lose one point, because they wrote in verse.
But so Thalia pleases to appear,
Poor virgin! damn'd some twenty times a year!

Whate'er the scene, let this advice have weight: —
Adapt your language to your hero's state.
At times Melpomene forgets to groan,
And brisk Thalia takes a serious tone;
Nor unregarded will the act pass by
Where angry Townly 'lifts his voice on high.'
Again, our Shakspeare limits verse to kings,
When common prose will serve for common things;
And lively Hal resigns heroic ire,
To 'hollowing Hotspur' and his sceptred sire.

'T is not enough, ye bards, with all your art,
To polish poems; they must touch the heart:
Where'er the scene be laid, whate'er the song,
Still let it bear the hearer's soul along;
Command your audience or to smile or weep,
Whiche'er may please you — anything but sleep.
The poet claims our tears; but, by his leave,
Before I shed them, let me see *him* grieve.

If banish'd Romeo feign'd nor sigh nor tear,
Lull'd by his languor, I could sleep or sneer.
Sad words, no doubt, become a serious face,
And men look angry in the proper place.
At double meanings folks seem wondrous sly,
And sentiment prescribes a pensive eye;
For nature form'd at first the inward man,
And actors copy nature — when they can.
She bids the beating heart with rapture bound,
Raised to the stars, or levell'd with the ground;
And for expression's aid, 't is said, or sung,
She gave our mind's interpreter — the tongue,
Who, worn with use, of late would fain dispense
(At least in theatres) with common sense:

O'erwhelm with sound the boxes, gallery, pit,
And raise a laugh with anything — but wit.

To skilful writers it will much import,
Whence spring their scenes, from common life or court;
Whether they seek applause by smile or tear,
To draw a Lying Valet, or a Lear,
A sage, or rakish youngster wild from school,
A wandering Peregrine, or plain John Bull;
All persons please when nature's voice prevails,
Scottish or Irish, born in Wilts or Wales.

Or follow common fame, or forge a plot.
Who cares if mimic heroes lived or not?
One precept serves to regulate the scene: —
Make it appear as if it *might* have *been.*

If some Drawcansir you aspire to draw,
Present him raving and above all law:
If female furies in your scheme are plann'd,
Macbeth's fierce dame is ready to your hand;
For tears and treachery, for good and evil,
Constance, King Richard, Hamlet, and the Devil!
But if a new design you dare essay,
And freely wander from the beaten way,
True to your characters, till all be pass'd,
Preserve consistency from first to last.

'T is hard to venture where our betters fail,
Or lend fresh interest to a twice-told tale;
And yet, perchance, 't is wiser to prefer
A hackney'd plot, than choose a new, and err.
Yet copy not too closely, but record,
More justly, thought for thought than word for word;
Nor trace your prototype through narrow ways,
But only follow where he merits praise.

For you, young bard! whom luckless fate may lead
To tremble on the nod of all who read,
Ere your first score of cantos time unrolls,
Beware — for God's sake, don't begin like Bowles!
'Awake a louder and a loftier strain,' —
And pray, what follows from his boiling brain?
He sinks to Southey's level in a trice,
Whose epic mountains never fail in mice!
Not so of yore awoke your mighty sire
The temper'd warblings of his master-lyre;
Soft as the gentler breathing of the lute,
'Of man's first disobedience and the fruit'
He speaks, but, as his subject swells along,
Earth, heaven, and Hades echo with the song.
Still to the 'midst of things' he hastens on,
As if we witness'd all already done;
Leaves on his path whatever seems too mean
To raise the subject, or adorn the scene;
Gives, as each page improves upon the sight,
Not smoke from brightness, but from darkness — light;
And truth and fiction with such art compounds,
We know not where to fix their several bounds.

If you would please the public, deign to hear
What soothes the many-headed monster's ear;
If your heart triumph when the hands of all
Applaud in thunder at the curtain's fall,
Deserve those plaudits — study nature's page,
And sketch the striking traits of every age;
While varying man and varying years unfold
Life's little tale, so oft, so vainly told.
Observe his simple childhood's dawning days,
His pranks, his prate, his playmates, and his plays;
Till time at length the mannish tyro weans,
And prurient vice outstrips his tardy teens!

Behold him Freshman! forced no more to groan
O'er Virgil's devilish verses and — his own;
Prayers are too tedious, lectures too abstruse,
He flies from Tavell's frown to 'Fordham's Mews'
(Unlucky Tavell! doom'd to daily cares
By pugilistic pupils, and by bears);

Fines, tutors, tasks, conventions threat in vain,
Before hounds, hunters, and Newmarket plain.
Rough with his elders, with his equals rash,
Civil to sharpers, prodigal of cash;
Constant to nought — save hazard and a whore,
Yet cursing both — for both have made him sore;
Unread (unless, since books beguile disease,
The p—x becomes his passage to degrees);
Fool’d, pillaged, dunn’d, he wastes his terms away,
And, unexpell’d perhaps, retires M. A.;
Master of arts! as *hells* and *clubs* proclaim,
Where scarce a blackleg bears a brighter name!

Launch’d into life, extinct his early fire,
He apes the selfish prudence of his sire;
Marries for money, chooses friends for rank,
Buys land, and shrewdly trusts not to the Bank;
Sits in the Senate; gets a son and heir;
Sends him to Harrow, for himself was there.
Mute, though he votes, unless when call’d to cheer,
His son ’s so sharp — he ’ll see the dog a peer!

Manhood declines — age palsies every limb;
He quits the scene — or else the scene quits him;
Scrapes wealth, o’er each departing penny grieves,
And avarice seizes all ambition leaves;
Counts cent per cent, and smiles, or vainly frets,
O’er hoards diminish’d by young Hopeful’s debts;
Weighs well and wisely what to sell or buy,
Complete in all life’s lessons — but to die;
Peevish and spiteful, doting, hard to please,
Commending every time, save times like these;
Crazed, querulous, forsaken, half forgot,
Expires unwept — is buried — let him rot!

But from the Drama let me not digress,
Nor spare my precepts, though they please you less.
Though woman weep, and hardest hearts are stirr’d,
When what is done is rather seen than heard,
Yet many deeds preserved in history’s page
Are better told than acted on the stage;
The ear sustains what shocks the timid eye,
And horror thus subsides to sympathy.
True Briton all beside, I here am French —
Bloodshed ’t is surely better to retrench:
The gladiatorial gore we teach to flow
In tragic scene disgusts, though but in show;
We hate the carnage while we see the trick,
And find small sympathy in being sick.
Not on the stage the regicide Macbeth
Appals an audience with a monarch’s death;
To gaze when sable Hubert threats to sear
Young Arthur’s eyes, can *ours* or *nature* bear?
A halter’d heroine Johnson sought to slay —
We saved Irene, but half damn’d the play,
And (Heaven be praised!) our tolerating times
Stint metamorphoses to pantomimes;
And Lewis’ self, with all his sprites, would quake
To change Earl Osmond’s negro to a snake!
Because, in scenes exciting joy or grief,
We loathe the action which exceeds belief.
And yet, God knows! what may not authors do,
Whose postscripts prate of dyeing ‘heroines blue?’

Above all things, *Dan* Poet, if you can,
Eke out your acts, I pray, with mortal man;
Nor call a ghost, unless some cursed scrape
Must open ten trap-doors for your escape.
Of all the monstrous things I ’d fain forbid,
I loathe an opera worse than Dennis did;
Where good and evil persons, right or wrong,
Rage, love, and aught but moralize, in song.
Hail, last memorial of our foreign friends,
Which Gaul allows and still Hesperia lends!
Napoleon’s edicts no embargo lay
On whores, spies, singers wisely shipp’d away.
Our giant capital, whose squares are spread
Where rustics earn’d, and now may beg, their bread.

In all iniquity is grown so nice,
It scorns amusements which are not of price.
Hence the pert shopkeeper, whose throbbing ear
Aches with orchestras which he pays to hear,
Whom shame, not sympathy, forbids to snore,
His anguish doubling by his own 'encore;'
Squeezed in 'Fop's Alley,' jostled by the beaux,
Teased with his hat, and trembling for his toes;
Scarce wrestles through the night, nor tastes of ease
Till the dropp'd curtain gives a glad release:
Why this, and more, he suffers — can ye guess? —
Because it costs him dear, and makes him dress!

So prosper eunuchs from Etruscan schools;
Give us but fiddlers, and they 're sure of fools!
Ere scenes were play'd by many a reverend clerk
(What harm, if David danced before the ark?),
In Christmas revels, simple country folks
Were pleased with morrice-mumm'ry and coarse jokes.
Improving years, with things no longer known,
Produced blithe Punch and merry Madame Joan,
Who still frisk on with feats so lewdly low,
'T is strange Benvolio suffers such a show;
Suppressing peer! to whom each vice gives place,
Oaths, boxing, begging, — all, save rout and race.

Farce follow'd Comedy, and reach'd her prime,
In ever-laughing Foote's fantastic time:
Mad wag! who pardon'd none, nor spared the best,
And turn'd some very serious things to jest.
Nor church nor state escaped his public sneers,
Arms nor the gown, priests, lawyers, volunteers:
'Alas, poor Yorick!' now forever mute!
Whoever loves a laugh must sigh for Foote.

We smile, perforce, when histrionic scenes
Ape the swoln dialogue of kings and queens,
When 'Chrononhotonthologos must die,'
And Arthur struts in mimic majesty.

Moschus! with whom once more I hope to sit,
And smile at folly, if we can't at wit;
Yes, friend! for thee I 'll quit my cynic cell,
And bear Swift's motto, 'Vive la bagatelle!'
Which charm'd our days in each Ægean clime,
As oft at home, with revelry and rhyme.
Then may Euphrosyne, who sped the past,
Soothe thy life's scenes, nor leave thee in the last;
But find in thine, like pagan Plato's bed,
Some merry manuscript of mimes, when dead.

Now to the Drama let us bend our eyes,
Where fetter'd by whig Walpole low she lies;
Corruption foil'd her, for she fear'd her glance;
Decorum left her for an opera dance!
Yet Chesterfield, whose polish'd pen inveighs
'Gainst laughter, fought for freedom to our plays;
Uncheck'd by megrims of patrician brains,
And damning dulness of lord chamberlains.
Repeal that act! again let Humour roam
Wild o'er the stage — we 've time for tears at home;
Let Archer plant the horns on Sullen's brows,
And Estifania gull her 'Copper' spouse;
The moral 's scant — but that may be excused,
Men go not to be lectured, but amused.
He whom our plays dispose to good or ill
Must wear a head in want of Willis' skill;
Ay, but Macheath's example — psha! — no more!
It form'd no thieves — the thief was form'd before;
And, spite of puritans and Collier's curse,
Plays make mankind no better, and no worse.
Then spare our stage, ye methodistic men;
Nor burn damn'd Drury if it rise again.

But why to brain-scorch'd bigots thus appeal?
Can heavenly mercy dwell with earthly zeal?
For times of fire and faggot let them hope!
Times dear alike to puritan or pope.
As pious Calvin saw Servetus blaze,
So would new sects on newer victims gaze.
E'en now the songs of Solyma begin;
Faith cants, perplex'd apologist of sin!
While the Lord's servant chastens whom he loves,
And Simeon kicks, where Baxter only 'shoves.'

Whom nature guides so writes that every dunce,
Enraptured, thinks to do the same at once;
But after inky thumbs and bitten nails,
And twenty scatter'd quires, the coxcomb fails.

Let Pastoral be dumb; for who can hope
To match the youthful eclogues of our Pope?
Yet his and Phillips' faults, of different kind,
For art too rude, for nature too refined,
Instruct how hard the medium 't is to hit
'Twixt too much polish and too coarse a wit.

A vulgar scribbler, certes, stands disgraced
In this nice age, when all aspire to taste;
The dirty language and the noisome jest,
Which pleased in Swift of yore, we now detest;
Proscribed not only in the world polite,
But even too nasty for a city knight!

Peace to Swift's faults! his wit hath made them pass,
Unmatch'd by all save matchless Hudibras!
Whose author is perhaps the first we meet,
Who from our couplet lopp'd two final feet;
Nor less in merit than the longer line,
This measure moves a favourite of the Nine.
Though at first view eight feet may seem in vain
Form'd, save in ode, to bear a serious strain,
Yet Scott has shown our wondering isle of late
This measure shrinks not from a theme of weight,
And, varied skilfully, surpasses far
Heroic rhyme, but most in love and war,
Whose fluctuations, tender or sublime,
Are curb'd too much by long-recurring rhyme.

But many a skilful judge abhors to see,
What few admire — irregularity.
This some vouchsafe to pardon; but 't is hard
When such a word contents a British bard.

And must the bard his glowing thoughts confine,
Lest censure hover o'er some faulty line?
Remove whate'er a critic may suspect,
To gain the paltry suffrage of '*correct*?'
Or prune the spirit of each daring phrase,
To fly from error, not to merit praise?

Ye, who seek finish'd models, never cease
By day and night to read the works of Greece.
But our good fathers never bent their brains
To heathen Greek, content with native strains.
The few who read a page, or used a pen,
Were satisfied with Chaucer and old Ben;
The jokes and numbers suited to their taste
Were quaint and careless, anything but chaste;
Yet whether right or wrong the ancient rules,
It will not do to call our fathers fools!
Though you and I, who eruditely know
To separate the elegant and low,
Can also, when a hobbling line appears,
Detect with fingers, in default of ears.

In sooth I do not know, or greatly care
To learn, who our first English strollers were;
Or if, till roofs received the vagrant art,
Our Muse, like that of Thespis, kept a cart;
But this is certain, since our Shakspeare's days,
There 's pomp enough, if little else, in plays;
Nor will Melpomene ascend her throne
Without high heels, white plume, and Bristol stone.

Old comedies still meet with much applause,
Though too licentious for dramatic laws:
At least, we moderns, wisely 't is confest,
Curtail or silence the lascivious jest.

Whate'er their follies, and their faults beside,
Our enterprising bards pass nought untried;
Nor do they merit slight applause who choose
An English subject for an English muse,
And leave to minds which never dare invent
French flippancy and German sentiment.
Where is that living language which could claim
Poetic more, as philosophic, fame,
If all our bards, more patient of delay,
Would stop like Pope to polish by the way?

Lords of the quill, whose critical assaults
O'erthrow whole quartos with their quires of faults,
Who soon detect, and mark where'er we fail,
And prove our marble with too nice a nail!
Democritus himself was not so bad;
He only *thought*, but *you* would make, us mad!

But truth to say, most rhymers rarely guard
Against that ridicule they deem so hard;
In person negligent, they wear, from sloth,
Beards of a week and nails of annual growth;
Reside in garrets, fly from those they meet,
And walk in alleys rather than the street.

With little rhyme, less reason, if you please,
The name of poet may be got with ease,
So that not tuns of helleboric juice
Shall ever turn your head to any use;
Write but like Wordsworth, live beside a lake,
And keep your bushy locks a year from Blake;
Then print your book, once more return to town,
And boys shall hunt your bardship up and down.

Am I not wise, if such some poets' plight,
To purge in spring — like Bayes — before I write?
If this precaution soften'd not my bile,
I know no scribbler with a madder style;
But since (perhaps my feelings are too nice)
I cannot purchase fame at such a price,
I 'll labour gratis as a grinder's wheel,
And, blunt myself, give edge to others' steel,
Nor write at all, unless to teach the art
To those rehearsing for the poet's part;
From Horace show the pleasing paths of song,
And from my own example — what is wrong.

Though modern practice sometimes differs quite,
'T is just as well to think before you write;
Let every book that suits your theme be read,
So shall you trace it to the fountain-head.

He who has learn'd the duty which he owes
To friends and country, and to pardon foes;
Who models his deportment as may best
Accord with brother, sire, or stranger guest;
Who takes our laws and worship as they are,
Nor roars reform for senate, church, and bar;
In practice, rather than loud precept, wise,
Bids not his tongue, but heart, philosophise; —
Such is the man the poet should rehearse,
As joint exemplar of his life and verse.

Sometimes a sprightly wit, and tale well told,
Without much grace or weight or art, will hold
A longer empire o'er the public mind
Than sounding trifles, empty, though refined.

Unhappy Greece! thy sons of ancient days
The muse may celebrate with perfect praise,
Whose generous children narrow'd not their hearts
With commerce, given alone to arms and arts.

Our boys (save those whom public schools compel
To 'long and short' before they 're taught to spell)
From frugal fathers soon imbibe by rote,
'A penny saved, my lad, 's a penny got.'
Babe of a city birth! from sixpence take
The third, how much will the remainder make? —
'A groat.' — 'Ah, bravo! Dick hath done the sum!
He 'll swell my fifty thousand to a plum.'

They whose young souls receive this rust betimes,
'T is clear, are fit for anything but rhymes;
And Locke will tell you, that the father 's right
Who hides all verses from his children's sight;
For poets (says this sage and many more)
Make sad mechanics with their lyric lore;
And Delphi now, however rich of old,
Discovers little silver and less gold,
Because Parnassus, though a mount divine,
Is poor as Irus or an Irish mine.

Two objects always should the poet move,
Or one or both, — to please or to improve.
Whate'er you teach, be brief, if you design
For our remembrance your didactic line;
Redundance places memory on the rack,
For brains may be o'erloaded, like the back.

Fiction does best when taught to look like truth,
And fairy fables bubble none but youth:
Expect no credit for too wondrous tales,
Since Jonas only springs alive from whales!

Young men with aught but elegance dispense;
Maturer years require a little sense.
To end at once: — that bard for all is fit
Who mingles well instruction with his wit;
For him reviews shall smile, for him o'erflow
The patronage of Paternoster-row;
His book, with Longman's liberal aid, shall pass
(Who ne'er despises books that bring him brass);
Through three long weeks the taste of London lead,
And cross St. George's Channel and the Tweed.

But everything has faults, nor is 't unknown
That harps and fiddles often lose their tone,
And wayward voices, at their owner's call,
With all his best endeavours, only squall;
Dogs blink their covey, flints withhold the spark,
And double-barrels (damn them!) miss their mark.

Where frequent beauties strike the reader's view,
We must not quarrel for a blot or two;
But pardon equally to books or men
The slips of human nature and the pen.

Yet if an author, spite of foe or friend,
Despises all advice too much to mend,
But ever twangs the same discordant string,
Give him no quarter howsoe'er he sing.
Let Havard's fate o'ertake him, who, for once,
Produced a play too dashing for a dunce:
At first none deem'd it his; but when his name
Announced the fact — what then? — it lost its fame.
Though all deplore when Milton deigns to doze,
In a long work 't is fair to steal repose.

As pictures, so shall poems be; some stand
The critic eye, and please when near at hand;
But others at a distance strike the sight;
This seeks the shade, but that demands the light,
Nor dreads the connoisseur's fastidious view,
But, ten times scrutinised, is ten times new.

Parnassian pilgrims! ye whom chance or choice
Hath led to listen to the Muse's voice,
Receive this counsel, and be timely wise;
Few reach the summit which before you lies.
Our church and state, our courts and camps, concede
Reward to very moderate heads indeed!
In these plain common sense will travel far;
All are not Erskines who mislead the bar.

But poesy between the best and worst
No medium knows; you must be last or first;
For middling poets' miserable volumes
Are damn'd alike by gods and men and columns.

Again, my Jeffrey! — as that sound inspires
How wakes my bosom to its wonted fires!
Fires, such as gentle Caledonians feel
When Southrons writhe upon their critic wheel,
Or mild Eclectics, when some, worse than Turks,
Would rob poor Faith to decorate 'good works.'
Such are the genial feelings thou canst claim —
My falcon flies not at ignoble game.
Mightiest of all Dunedin's beasts of chase!
For thee my Pegasus would mend his pace.
Arise, my Jeffrey! or my inkless pen
Shall never blunt its edge on meaner men;
Till thee or thine mine evil eye discerns,
Alas! I cannot 'strike at wretched kernes.'
Inhuman Saxon! wilt thou then resign
A muse and heart by choice so wholly thine?
Dear, d—d contemner of my schoolboy songs,
Hast thou no vengeance for my manhood's wrongs?
If unprovoked thou once could bid me bleed,
Hast thou no weapon for my daring deed?
What! — not a word! — and am I then so low?
Wilt thou forbear, who never spared a foe?
Hast thou no wrath, or wish to give it vent?
No wit for nobles, dunces by descent?
No jest on 'minors,' quibbles on a name,
Nor one facetious paragraph of blame?
Is it for this on Ilion I have stood,
And thought of Homer less than Holyrood?
On shore of Euxine or Ægean sea,
My hate, untravell'd, fondly turn'd to thee.
Ah! let me cease; in vain my bosom burns,
From Corydon unkind Alexis turns:
Thy rhymes are vain; thy Jeffrey then forego,
Nor woo that anger which he will not show.
What then? — Edina starves some lanker son,
To write an article thou canst not shun;
Some less fastidious Scotchman shall be found,
As bold in Billingsgate, though less renown'd.

As if at table some discordant dish
Should shock our optics, such as frogs for fish;
As oil in lieu of butter men decry,
And poppies please not in a modern pie;
If all such mixtures then be half a crime,
We must have excellence to relish rhyme.
Mere roast and boil'd no epicure invites;
Thus poetry disgusts, or else delights.

Who shoot not flying rarely touch a gun:
Will he who swims not to the river run?
And men unpractised in exchanging knocks
Must go to Jackson ere they dare to box.
Whate'er the weapon, cudgel, fist, or foil,
None reach expertness without years of toil;
But fifty dunces can, with perfect ease,
Tag twenty thousand couplets when they please.
Why not? — shall I, thus qualified to sit
For rotten boroughs, never show my wit?
Shall I, whose fathers with the quorum sate,
And lived in freedom on a fair estate;
Who left me heir, with stables, kennels, packs.
To *all* their income, and to — *twice* its tax;
Whose form and pedigree have scarce a fault, —
Shall I, I say, suppress my Attic salt?

Thus think 'the mob of gentlemen;' but you,
Besides all this, must have some genius too.
Be this your sober judgment, and a rule,
And print not piping hot from Southey's school,
Who (ere another Thalaba appears),
I trust, will spare us for at least nine years.
And hark ye, Southey! pray — but don't be vex'd —
Burn all your last three works — and half the next.
But why this vain advice? once publish'd, books
Can never be recall'd — from pastry-cooks!
Though *Madoc*, with *Pucelle*, instead of punk,
May travel back to Quito — on a trunk

Orpheus, we learn from Ovid and Lempriere,
Led all wild beasts but women by the ear;
And had he fiddled at the present hour,
We 'd seen the lions waltzing in the Tower;
And old Amphion, such were minstrels then,
Had built St. Paul's without the aid of Wren.
Verse too was justice, and the bards of Greece
Did more than constables to keep the peace;
Abolish'd cuckoldom with much applause,
Call'd county meetings, and enforced the laws,
Cut down crown influence with reforming scythes,
And served the church — without demanding tithes;
And hence, throughout all Hellas and the East,
Each poet was a prophet and a priest,
Whose old-establish'd board of joint controls
Included kingdoms in the cure of souls.

Next rose the martial Homer, Epic's prince,
And fighting 's been in fashion ever since;
And old Tyrtæus, when the Spartans warr'd
(A limping leader, but a lofty bard),
Though wall'd Ithome had resisted long,
Reduced the fortress by the force of song.

When oracles prevail'd, in times of old,
In song alone Apollo's will was told.
Then if your verse is what all verse should be,
And gods were not asham'd on 't, why should we?

The Muse, like mortal females, may be woo'd;
In turns she 'll seem a Paphian, or a prude;
Fierce as a bride when first she feels affright,
Mild as the same upon the second night;
Wild as the wife of alderman or peer,
Now for his grace, and now a grenadier!
Her eyes beseem, her heart belies, her zone,
Ice in a crowd and lava when alone.

If verse be studied with some show of art,
Kind Nature always will perform her part;
Though without genius and a native vein
Of wit, we loathe an artificial strain —
Yet art and nature join'd will win the prize,
Unless they act like us and our allies.

The youth who trains to ride or run a race,
Must bear privations with unruffled face,
Be call'd to labour when he thinks to dine,
And, harder still, leave wenching and his wine.
Ladies who sing, at least who sing at sight,
Have follow'd music through her farthest flight;
But rhymers tell you neither more nor less,
'I 've got a pretty poem for the press;'
And that 's enough; then write and print so fast; —
If Satan take the hindmost, who 'd be last?
They storm the types, they publish, one and all,
They leap the counter, and they leave the stall.
Provincial maidens, men of high command,
Yea, baronets have ink'd the bloody hand!
Cash cannot quell them; Pollio play'd this prank
(Then Phœbus first found credit in a bank!),
Not all the living only, but the dead,
Fool on, as fluent as an Orpheus' head;
Damn'd all their days, they posthumously thrive —
Dug up from dust, though buried when alive!
Reviews record this epidemic crime,
Those Books of Martyrs to the rage for rhyme.
Alas! woe worth the scribbler! often seen
In Morning Post, or Monthly Magazine.
There lurk his earlier lays; but soon, hot-press'd,
Behold a quarto! — Tarts must tell the rest.
Then leave, ye wise, the lyre's precarious chords
To muse-mad baronets or madder lords,
Or country Crispins, now grown somewhat stale,
Twin Doric minstrels, drunk with Doric ale!
Hark to those notes, narcotically soft,
The cobbler-laureats sing to Capel Lofft!
Till, lo! that modern Midas, as he hears,
Adds an ell growth to his egregious ears!

There lives one druid, who prepares in time
'Gainst future feuds his poor revenge of rhyme;
Racks his dull memory and his duller muse,
To publish faults which friendship should excuse.
If friendship's nothing, self-regard might teach
More polish'd usage of his parts of speech.
But what is shame, or what is aught to him?
He vents his spleen, or gratifies his whim.
Some fancied slight has roused his lurking hate,
Some folly cross'd, some jest, or some debate;
Up to his den Sir Scribbler hies, and soon
The gather'd gall is voided in lampoon.
Perhaps at some pert speech you've dared to frown,
Perhaps your poem may have pleased the town:
If so, alas! 't is nature in the man —
May Heaven forgive you, for he never can!
Then be it so; and may his withering bays
Bloom fresh in satire, though they fade in praise!
While his lost songs no more shall steep and stink,
The dullest, fattest weeds on Lethe's brink,
But springing upwards from the sluggish mould,
Be (what they never were before) be — sold!
Should some rich bard (but such a monster now,
In modern physics, we can scarce allow),
Should some pretending scribbler of the court,
Some rhyming peer — there's plenty of the sort —
All but one poor dependent priest withdrawn
(Ah! too regardless of his chaplain's yawn!),
Condemn the unlucky curate to recite
Their last dramatic work by candle-light,
How would the preacher turn each rueful leaf,
Dull as his sermons, but not half so brief!
Yet, since 't is promised at the rector's death,
He'll risk no living for a little breath.
Then spouts and foams, and cries at every line
(The Lord forgive him!), 'Bravo! grand! divine!'
Hoarse with those praises (which, by flatt'ry fed,
Dependence barters for her bitter bread),
He strides and stamps along with creaking boot,
Till the floor echoes his emphatic foot;
Then sits again, then rolls his pious eye,
As when the dying vicar will not die!
Nor feels, forsooth, emotion at his heart; —
But all dissemblers overact their part.

Ye, who aspire to 'build the lofty rhyme,'
Believe not all who laud your false 'sublime;'
But if some friend shall hear your work, and say,
'Expunge that stanza, lop that line away,'
And, after fruitless efforts, you return
Without amendment, and he answers, 'Burn!'
That instant throw your paper in the fire,
Ask not his thoughts, or follow his desire;
But if (true bard!) you scorn to condescend,
And will not alter what you can't defend,
If you will breed this bastard of your brains, —
We'll have no words — I've only lost my pains.

Yet, if you only prize your favourite thought,
As critics kindly do, and authors ought;
If your cool friend annoy you now and then,
And cross whole pages with his plaguy pen;
No matter, throw your ornaments aside, —
Better let him than all the world deride.
Give light to passages too much in shade,
Nor let a doubt obscure one verse you've made;
Your friend's a 'Johnson,' not to leave one word,
However trifling, which may seem absurd;
Such erring trifles lead to serious ills,
And furnish food for critics, or their quills.

As the Scotch fiddle, with its touching tune,
Or the sad influence of the angry moon,

All men avoid bad writers' ready tongues,
As yawning waiters fly Fitzscribble's lungs;
Yet on he mouths — ten minutes — tedious each
As prelate's homily or placeman's speech;
Long as the last years of a lingering lease,
When riot pauses until rents increase.
While such a minstrel, muttering fustian, strays
O'er hedge and ditch, through unfrequented ways,
If by some chance he walks into a well,
And shouts for succour with stentorian yell,
'A rope! help, Christians, as ye hope for grace!'
Nor woman, man, nor child will stir a pace;
For there his carcass he might freely fling,
From frenzy or the humour of the thing.
Though this has happen'd to more bards than one;
I'll tell you Budgell's story, — and have done.

Budgell, a rogue and rhymester, for no good
(Unless his case be much misunderstood),
When teased with creditors' continual claims,
'To die like Cato,' leapt into the Thames!
And therefore be it lawful through the town
For any bard to poison, hang, or drown.
Who saves the intended suicide receives
Small thanks from him who loathes the life he leaves;
And, sooth to say, mad poets must not lose
The glory of that death they freely choose.

Nor is it certain that some sorts of verse
Prick not the poet's conscience as a curse;
Dosed with vile drams on Sunday he was found,
Or got a child on consecrated ground!
And hence is haunted with a rhyming rage —
Fear'd like a bear just bursting from his cage.
If free, all fly his versifying fit,
Fatal at once to simpleton or wit:
But *him*, unhappy! whom he seizes, — *him*
He flays with recitation limb by limb;
Probes to the quick where'er he makes his breach,
And gorges like a lawyer — or a leech.

THE CURSE OF MINERVA

> —— Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas
> Immolat, et pœnam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.
> *Æneid* xii. [948, 949]

Athens: Capuchin Convent, *March* 17, 1811.

Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,
Along Morea's hills the setting sun;
Not, as in northern climes, obscurely bright,
But one unclouded blaze of living light!
O'er the hush'd deep the yellow beam he throws,
Gilds the green wave that trembles as it glows.
On old Ægina's rock and Hydra's isle
The god of gladness sheds his parting smile;
O'er his own regions lingering loves to shine,
Though there his altars are no more divine.
Descending fast, the mountain-shadows kiss
Thy glorious gulf, unconquer'd Salamis!
Their azure arches through the long expanse
More deeply purpled meet his mellowing glance,
And tenderest tints, along their summits driven,
Mark his gay course and own the hues of heaven;
Till, darkly shaded from the land and deep,
Behind his Delphian rock he sinks to sleep.

On such an eve his palest beam he cast
When, Athens! here thy wisest look'd his last.
How watch'd thy better sons his farewell ray,
That closed their murder'd sage's latest day!
Not yet — not yet — Sol pauses on the hill,
The precious hour of parting lingers still;
But sad his light to agonising eyes,
And dark the mountain's once delightful dyes:
Gloom o'er the lovely land he seem'd to pour,
The land where Phœbus never frown'd before;
But ere he sunk below Cithæron's head,
The cup of woe was quaff'd — the spirit fled;
The soul of him that scorn'd to fear or fly,
Who lived and died as none can live or die.

But, lo! from high Hymettus to the plain,
The queen of night asserts her silent reign.
No murky vapour, herald of the storm,
Hides her fair face, or girds her glowing form.
With cornice glimmering as the moonbeams play,
There the white column greets her grateful ray,
And bright around, with quivering beams beset,
Her emblem sparkles o'er the minaret:
The groves of olive scatter'd dark and wide
Where meek Cephisus sheds his scanty tide,
The cypress saddening by the sacred mosque,
The gleaming turret of the gay kiosk,
And, sad and sombre mid the holy calm,
Near Theseus' fane yon solitary palm;
All, tinged with varied hues, arrest the eye —
And dull were his that pass'd them heedless by.

Again the Ægean, heard no more afar,
Lulls his chafed breast from elemental war;
Again his waves in milder tints unfold
Their long expanse of sapphire and of gold,
Mix'd with the shades of many a distant isle
That frown, where gentler ocean deigns to smile.

As thus, within the walls of Pallas' fane,
I mark'd the beauties of the land and main,
Alone and friendless on the magic shore,
Whose arts and arms but live in poets' lore;
Oft as the matchless dome I turn'd to scan,
Sacred to gods but not secure from man,
The past return'd, the present seem'd to cease,
And Glory knew no clime beyond her Greece!

Hours roll'd along, and Dian's orb on high
Had gain'd the centre of her softest sky;
And yet unwearied still my footsteps trod
O'er the vain shrine of many a vanish'd god:
But chiefly, Pallas! thine; when Hecate's glare,
Check'd by thy columns, fell more sadly fair
O'er the chill marble, where the startling tread
Thrills the lone heart like echoes from the dead.
Long had I mused, and treasured every trace
The wreck of Greece recorded of her race,
When, lo! a giant form before me strode,
And Pallas hail'd me in her own abode!

Yes, 't was Minerva's self; but, ah! how changed
Since o'er the Dardan field in arms she ranged!
Not such as first, by her divine command,
Her form appear'd from Phidias' plastic hand.
Gone were the terrors of her awful brow,
Her idle ægis bore no Gorgon now;
Her helm was dinted, and the broken lance
Seem'd weak and shaftless e'en to mortal glance;
The olive branch, which still she deign'd to clasp,
Shrunk from her touch and wither'd in her grasp;
And, ah! though still the brightest of the sky,
Celestial tears bedimm'd her large blue eye;
Round the rent casque her owlet circled slow,
And mourn'd his mistress with a shriek of woe!

'Mortal!' — 't was thus she spake — 'that blush of shame
Proclaims thee Briton, once a noble name;
First of the mighty, foremost of the free,
Now honour'd *less* by all, and *least* by me:
Chief of thy foes shall Pallas still be found.
Seek'st thou the cause of loathing? — look around.
Lo! here, despite of war and wasting fire,
I saw successive tyrannies expire;
'Scaped from the ravage of the Turk and Goth,
Thy country sends a spoiler worse than both.
Survey this vacant, violated fane;
Recount the relics torn that yet remain:
These Cecrops placed, *this* Pericles adorn'd.
That Adrian rear'd when drooping Science mourn'd.
What more I owe let gratitude attest —
Know, Alaric and Elgin did the rest.
That all may learn from whence the plunderer came,
The insulted wall sustains his hated name:

For Elgin's fame thus grateful Pallas pleads,
Below, his name — above, behold his deeds!
Be ever hail'd with equal honour here
The Gothic monarch and the Pictish peer:
Arms gave the first his right, the last had none,
But basely stole what less barbarians won.
So when the lion quits his fell repast,
Next prowls the wolf, the filthy jackal last:
Flesh, limbs, and blood the former make their own,
The last poor brute securely gnaws the bone.
Yet still the gods are just, and crimes are cross'd:
See here what Elgin won, and what he lost!
Another name with *his* pollutes my shrine:
Behold where Dian's beams disdain to shine!
Some retribution still might Pallas claim,
When Venus half avenged Minerva's shame.'

She ceased awhile, and thus I dared reply,
To soothe the vengeance kindling in her eye:
'Daughter of Jove! in Britain's injured name,
A true-born Briton may the deed disclaim.
Frown not on England; England owns him not:
Athena, no! thy plunderer was a Scot.
Ask'st thou the difference? From fair Phyles' towers
Survey Bœotia; — Caledonia's ours.
And well I know within that bastard land
Hath Wisdom's goddess never held command;
A barren soil, where Nature's germs, confined
To stern sterility, can stint the mind;
Whose thistle well betrays the niggard earth,
Emblem of all to whom the land gives birth;
Each genial influence nurtured to resist;
A land of meanness, sophistry, and mist.
Each breeze from foggy mount and marshy plain
Dilutes with drivel every drizzly brain,
Till, burst at length, each watery head o'erflows,
Foul as their soil and frigid as their snows.
Then thousand schemes of petulance and pride
Despatch her scheming children far and wide:
Some east, some west, some every where but north,
In quest of lawless gain, they issue forth.
And thus — accursèd be the day and year! —
She sent a Pict to play the felon here.
Yet Caledonia claims some native worth,
As dull Bœotia gave a Pindar birth;
So may her few, the letter'd and the brave,
Bound to no clime and victors of the grave,
Shake off the sordid dust of such a land,
And shine like children of a happier strand;
As once of yore in some obnoxious place,
Ten names (if found) had saved a wretched race.'

'Mortal!' the blue-eyed maid resumed, 'once more
Bear back my mandate to thy native shore.
Though fallen, alas! this vengeance yet is mine,
To turn my counsels far from lands like thine.
Hear then in silence Pallas' stern behest;
Hear and believe, for Time will tell the rest.

'First on the head of him who did this deed
My curse shall light, — on him and all his seed:
Without one spark of intellectual fire,
Be all the sons as senseless as the sire:
If one with wit the parent brood disgrace,
Believe him bastard of a brighter race.
Still with his hireling artists let him prate,
And Folly's praise repay for Wisdom's hate;
Long of their patron's gusto let them tell,
Whose noblest, *native* gusto is — to sell:
To sell, and make — may Shame record the day! —
The state receiver of his pilfer'd prey.
Meantime, the flattering, feeble dotard, West,
Europe's worst dauber, and poor Britain's best,
With palsied hand shall turn each model o'er
And own himself an infant of fourscore.
Be all the bruisers cull'd from all St. Giles'
That art and nature may compare their styles;

While brawny brutes in stupid wonder stare,
And marvel at his lordship's "stone shop" there.
Round the throng'd gate shall sauntering coxcombs creep,
To lounge and lucubrate, to prate and peep;
While many a languid maid, with longing sigh,
On giant statues casts the curious eye;
The room with transient glance appears to skim,
Yet marks the mighty back and length of limb;
Mourns o'er the difference of *now* and *then*;
Exclaims, "These Greeks indeed were proper men!"
Draws sly comparisons of *these* with *those*,
And envies Laïs all her Attic beaux.
When shall a modern maid have swains like these!
Alas, Sir Harry is no Hercules!
And last of all, amidst the gaping crew,
Some calm spectator, as he takes his view,
In silent indignation mix'd with grief,
Admires the plunder but abhors the thief.
Oh, loathed in life nor pardon'd in the dust,
May hate pursue his sacrilegious lust!
Link'd with the fool that fired the Ephesian dome,
Shall vengeance follow far beyond the tomb,
And Eratostratus and Elgin shine
In many a branding page and burning line;
Alike reserved for aye to stand accursed,
Perchance the second blacker than the first.

'So let him stand, through ages yet unborn,
Fix'd statue on the pedestal of Scorn;
Though not for him alone revenge shall wait,
But fits thy country for her coming fate:
Hers were the deeds that taught her lawless son
To do what oft Britannia's self had done.
Look to the Baltic — blazing from afar,
Your old ally yet mourns perfidious war.
Not to such deeds did Pallas lend her aid,
Or break the compact which herself had made;
Far from such councils, from the faithless field
She fled — but left behind her Gorgon shield:
A fatal gift that turn'd your friends to stone,
And left lost Albion hated and alone.

'Look to the East, where Ganges' swarthy race
Shall shake your tyrant empire to its base;
Lo! there Rebellion rears her ghastly head,
And glares the Nemesis of native dead;
Till Indus rolls a deep purpureal flood,
And claims his long arrear of northern blood.
So may ye perish! — Pallas, when she gave
Your free-born rights, forbade ye to enslave.

'Look on your Spain! — she clasps the hand she hates,
But boldly clasps, and thrusts you from her gates.
Bear witness, bright Barossa! thou canst tell
Whose were the sons that bravely fought and fell.
But Lusitania, kind and dear ally,
Can spare a few to fight, and sometimes fly.
Oh glorious field! by Famine fiercely won,
The Gaul retires for once, and all is done!
But when did Pallas teach, that one retreat
Retrieved three long olympiads of defeat?

'Look last at home — ye love not to look there
On the grim smile of comfortless despair:
Your city saddens; loud though Revel howls,
Here Famine faints and yonder Rapine prowls.
See all alike of more or less bereft;
No misers tremble when there 's nothing left.
"Blest paper credit;" who shall dare to sing?
It clogs like lead Corruption's weary wing.
Yet Pallas pluck'd each premier by the ear,
Who gods and men alike disdain'd to hear;
But one, repentant o'er a bankrupt state,
On Pallas calls, — but calls, alas! too late:
Then raves for . . . ; to that Mentor bends,
Though he and Pallas never yet were friends.
Him senates hear, whom never yet they heard,
Contemptuous once, and now no less absurd.

So, once of yore, each reasonable frog
Swore faith and fealty to his sovereign "log."
Thus hail'd your rulers their patrician clod,
As Egypt chose an onion for a god.

'Now fare ye well! enjoy your little hour;
Go, grasp the shadow of your vanish'd power;
Gloss o'er the failure of each fondest scheme;
Your strength a name, your bloated wealth a dream.
Gone is that gold, the marvel of mankind,
And pirates barter all that 's left behind.
No more the hirelings, purchased near and far,
Crowd to the ranks of mercenary war.
The idle merchant on the useless quay
Droops o'er the bales no bark may bear away;
Or, back returning, sees rejected stores
Rot piecemeal on his own encumber'd shores:
The starved mechanic breaks his rusting loom,
And desperate mans him 'gainst the coming doom.
Then in the senate of your sinking state
Show me the man whose counsels may have weight.
Vain is each voice where tones could once command;
E'en factions cease to charm a factious land:
Yet jarring sects convulse a sister isle,
And light with maddening hands the mutual pile.

'’T is done, 't is past, since Pallas warns in vain;
The Furies seize her abdicated reign:
Wide o'er the realm they wave their kindling brands,
And wring her vitals with their fiery hands.
But one convulsive struggle still remains,
And Gaul shall weep ere Albion wear her chains.
The banner'd pomp of war, the glittering files,
O'er whose gay trappings stern Bellona smiles;
The brazen trump, the spirit-stirring drum,
That bid the foe defiance ere they come;
The hero bounding at his country's call,
The glorious death that consecrates his fall,
Swell the young heart with visionary charms,
And bid it antedate the joys of arms.
But know, a lesson you may yet be taught,
With death alone are laurels cheaply bought:
Not in the conflict Havoc seeks delight,
His day of mercy is the day of fight.
But when the field is fought, the battle won,
Though drench'd with gore, his woes are but begun:
His deeper deeds as yet ye know by name;
The slaughter'd peasant and the ravish'd dame,
The rifled mansion and the foe-reap'd field,
Ill suit with souls at home, untaught to yield.
Say with what eye along the distant down
Would flying burghers mark the blazing town?
How view the column of ascending flames
Shake his red shadow o'er the startled Thames?
Nay, frown not, Albion! for the torch was thine
That lit such pyres from Tagus to the Rhine:
Now should they burst on thy devoted coast,
Go, ask thy bosom who deserves them most.
The law of heaven and earth is life for life,
And she who raised, in vain regrets, the strife.'

THE WALTZ

AN APOSTROPHIC HYMN

BY HORACE HORNEM, ESQ.

Qualis in Eurotæ ripis aut per juga Cynthi,
Exercet Diana choros.
VIRGIL. [*Æneid* i. 498, 499.]

'Such on Eurotas' banks, or Cynthus' height,
Diana seems; and so she charms the sight,
When in the dance the graceful goddess leads
The quire of nymphs, and overtops their heads.'
DRYDEN'S *Virgil*.

TO THE PUBLISHER

SIR, — I am a country gentleman of a midland county. I might have been a parliament-man for a certain borough: having had the offer of as many votes as General T. at the general election in 1812. But I was all for domestic happiness; as, fifteen years ago, on a visit to London, I married a middle-aged maid of honour. We lived happily at Hornem Hall till last season, when my wife and I were invited by the Countess of Waltzaway (a distant relation of my spouse) to pass the winter in town. Thinking no harm, and our girls being come to a marriageable (or, as they call it, *marketable*) age, and having besides a Chancery suit inveterately entailed upon the family estate, we came up in our old chariot, — of which, by the by, my wife grew so much ashamed in less than a week, that I was obliged to buy a second-hand barouche, of which I might mount the box, Mrs. H. says, if I could drive, but never see the inside — that place being reserved for the Honourable Augustus Tiptoe, her partner-general and opera-knight. Hearing great praises of Mrs. H.'s dancing (she was famous for birthnight minuets in the latter end of the last century), I unbooted, and went to a ball at the Countess's, expecting to see a country dance, or, at most, cotillions, reels, and all the old paces to the newest tunes. But, judge of my surprise, on arriving, to see poor dear Mrs. Hornem with her arms half round the loins of a huge hussar-looking gentleman I never set eyes on before; and his, to say truth, rather more than half round her waist, turning round, and round, and round, to a d——d see-saw up-and-down sort of tune, that reminded me of the 'Black-joke,' only more '*affetuoso*,' till it made me quite giddy with wondering they were not so. By-and-by they stopped a bit, and I thought they would sit or fall down: — but no; with Mrs. H.'s hand on his shoulder, '*quam familiariter*'[1] (as Terence said, when I was at school), they walked about a minute, and then at it again, like two cockchafers spitted on the same bodkin. I asked what all this meant, when, with a loud laugh, a child no older than our Wilhelmina (a name I never heard but in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, though her mother would call her after the Princess of Swappenbach) said, 'Lord! Mr. Hornem, can't you see they are valtzing?' or waltzing (I forget which); and then up she got, and her mother and sister, and away they went, and round-abouted it till supper-time. Now that I know what it is, I like it of all things, and so does Mrs. H. (though I have broken my shins, and four times overturned Mrs. Hornem's maid, in practising the preliminary steps in a morning). Indeed, so much do I like it, that having a turn for rhyme, tastily displayed in some election ballads, and songs in honour of all the victories (but till lately I have had little practice in that way), I sat down, and with the aid of William Fitzgerald, Esq., and a few hints from Dr. Busby (whose recitations I attend, and am monstrous fond of Master Busby's manner of delivering his father's late successful *Drury Lane Address*), I composed the following hymn, wherewithal to make my sentiments known to the public; whom, nevertheless, I heartily despise, as well as the critics.

I am, Sir, yours, etc., etc..
HORACE HORNEM.

MUSE of the many-twinkling feet! whose charms
Are now extended up from legs to arms;
Terpsichore! too long misdeem'd a maid —
Reproachful term bestow'd but to upbraid —
Henceforth in all the bronze of brightness shine,
The least a vestal of the virgin Nine.
Far be from thee and thine the name of prude;
Mock'd, yet triumphant; sneer'd at, unsubdued;
Thy legs must move to conquer as they fly,
If but thy coats are reasonably high;
Thy breast — if bare enough — requires no shield;
Dance forth — *sans armour* thou shalt take the field,
And own, impregnable to *most* assaults,
Thy not too lawfully begotten 'Waltz.'

Hail, nimble nymph! to whom the young hussar,
The whisker'd votary of waltz and war,
His night devotes, despite of spur and boots;
A sight unmatch'd since Orpheus and his brutes.
Hail, spirit-stirring Waltz! — beneath whose banners
A modern hero fought for modish manners;
On Hounslow's Heath to rival Wellesley's fame,
Cock'd, fired, and miss'd his man — but gain'd his aim;
Hail, moving Muse! to whom the fair one's breast
Gives all it can, and bids us take the rest.

---

[1] My Latin is all forgotten, if a man can be said to have forgotten what he never remembered; but I bought my title-page motto of a Catholic priest for a three-shilling bank token, after much haggling for the *even* sixpence. I grudged the money to a papist, being all for the memory of Perceval and 'No popery,' and quite regretting the downfall of the pope, because we can't burn him any more.

Oh! for the flow of Busby or of Fitz,
The latter's loyalty, the former's wits,
To 'energise the object I pursue,'
And give both Belial and his dance their due!

Imperial Waltz! imported from the Rhine
(Famed for the growth of pedigrees and wine),
Long be thine import from all duty free,
And hock itself be less esteem'd than thee:
In some few qualities alike — for hock
Improves our cellar, *thou* our living stock.
The head to hock belongs, thy subtler art
Intoxicates alone the heedless heart;
Through the full veins thy gentler poison swims,
And wakes to wantonness the willing limbs.

Oh, Germany! how much to thee we owe,
As heaven-born Pitt can testify below,
Ere cursed confederation made thee France's,
And only left us thy d——d debts and dances!
Of subsidies and Hanover bereft,
We bless thee still — for George the Third is left!
Of kings the best — and last, not least in worth,
For graciously begetting George the Fourth.
To Germany, and highnesses serene,
Who owe us millions — don't we owe the queen?
To Germany, what owe we not besides?
So oft bestowing Brunswickers and brides;
Who paid for vulgar, with her royal blood,
Drawn from the stem of each Teutonic stud:
Who sent us — so be pardon'd all her faults —
A dozen dukes, some kings, a queen — and Waltz.

But peace to her, her emperor and diet,
Though now transferr'd to Buonapartè's 'fiat!'
Back to my theme. — O Muse of motion! say,
How first to Albion found thy Waltz her way?

Borne on the breath of hyberborean gales,
From Hamburg's port (while Hamburg yet had *mails*),
Ere yet unlucky Fame, compell'd to creep
To snowy Gottenburg, was chill'd to sleep;
Or, starting from her slumbers, deign'd arise,
Heligoland! to stock thy mart with lies;
While unburnt Moscow yet had news to send,
Nor owed her fiery exit to a friend, —
She came — Waltz came, and with her certain sets
Of true despatches and as true gazettes;
Then flamed of Austerlitz the blest despatch,
Which *Moniteur* nor *Morning Post* can match;
And — almost crush'd beneath the glorious news —
Ten plays and forty tales of Kotzebue's;
One envoy's letters, six composers' airs,
And loads from Frankfort and from Leipsic fairs;
Meiner's four volumes upon womankind,
Like Lapland witches to ensure a wind;
Brunck's heaviest tome for ballast, and, to back it,
Of Heyne, such as should not sink the packet.

Fraught with this cargo — and her fairest freight,
Delightful Waltz on tiptoe for a mate,
The welcome vessel reach'd the genial strand,
And round her flock'd the daughters of the land.
Not decent David, when before the ark
His grand pas-seul excited some remark;
Not love-lorn Quixote, when his Sancho thought
The knight's fandango friskier than it ought;
Not soft Herodias, when, with winning tread,
Her nimble feet danced off another's head;
Not Cleopatra on her galley's deck
Display'd so much of *leg*, or more of *neck*,
Than thou, ambrosial Waltz, when first the moon
Beheld thee twirling to a Saxon tune!

To you, ye husbands of ten years! whose brows
Ache with the annual tributes of a spouse;

To you of nine years less, who only bear
The budding sprouts of those that you *shall* wear,
With added ornaments around them roll'd
Of native brass or law-awarded gold;
To you, ye matrons, ever on the watch
To mar a son's, or make a daughter's, match;
To you, ye children of — whom chance accords —
Always the ladies, and *sometimes* their lords;
To you, ye single gentlemen, who seek
Torments for life or pleasures for a week,
As Love or Hymen your endeavours guide
To gain your own or snatch another's bride; —
To one and all the lovely stranger came,
And every ball-room echoes with her name.

Endearing Waltz! — to thy more melting tune
Bow Irish jig and ancient rigadoon.
Scotch reels, avaunt! and country-dance, forego
Your future claims to each fantastic toe!
Waltz — Waltz alone — both legs and arms demands,
Liberal of feet and lavish of her hands;
Hands which may freely range in public sight
Where ne'er before — but — pray 'put out the light,'
Methinks the glare of yonder chandelier
Shines much too far — or I am much too near;
And true though strange, Waltz whispers this remark,
'My slippery steps are safest in the dark!'
But here the Muse with due decorum halts,
And lends her longest petticoat to 'Waltz.'

Observant travellers of every time!
Ye quartos publish'd upon every clime!
Oh say, shall dull Romaika's heavy round,
Fandango's wriggle, or Bolero's bound;
Can Egypt's Almas — tantalising group;
Columbia's caperers to the warlike whoop;
Can aught from cold Kamschatka to Cape Horn
With Waltz compare or after Waltz be borne?
Ah, no! from Morier's pages down to Galt's,
Each tourist pens a paragraph for 'Waltz.'

Shades of those belles whose reign began of yore,
With George the Third's — and ended long before! —
Though in your daughters' daughters yet you thrive,
Burst from your lead and be yourselves alive!
Back to the ball-room speed your spectred host:
Fool's Paradise is dull to that you lost.
No treacherous powder bids conjecture quake;
No stiff-starch'd stays make meddling fingers ache
(Transferr'd to those ambiguous things that ape
Goats in their visage, women in their shape!);
No damsel faints when rather closely press'd,
But more caressing seems when most caress'd;
Superfluous hartshorn, and reviving salts,
Both banish'd by the sovereign cordial 'Waltz.'

Seductive Waltz! — though on thy native shore
Even Werter's self proclaim'd thee half a whore —
Werter, to decent vice though much inclined,
Yet warm not wanton, dazzled but not blind;
Though gentle Genlis, in her strife with Staël,
Would even proscribe thee from a Paris ball;
The fashion hails — from countesses to queens,
And maids and valets waltz behind the scenes.
Wide and more wide thy witching circle spreads,
And turns — if nothing else — at least our *heads;*
With thee even clumsy cits attempt to bounce,
And cockneys practise what they can't pronounce.
Gods! how the glorious theme my strain exalts,
And rhyme finds partner rhyme in praise of 'Waltz!'

Blest was the time Waltz chose for her *début:*
The court, the Regent, like herself were new;
New face for friends, for foes some new rewards;
New ornaments for black and royal guards;
New laws to hang the rogues that roar'd for bread;
New coins (most new) to follow those that fled;
New victories — nor can we prize them less,
Though Jenky wonders at his own success;
New wars, because the old succeed so well
That most survivors envy those who fell;
New mistresses — no, old — and yet 't is true,
Though they be *old*, the *thing* is something new;
Each new, quite new (except some ancient tricks),
New white-sticks, gold-sticks, broomsticks, all new sticks!
With vests or ribands — deck'd alike in hue,
New troopers strut, new turncoats blush in blue:
So saith the muse: my ——, what say you?
Such was the time when Waltz might best maintain
Her new preferments in this novel reign;
Such was the time, nor ever yet was such;
Hoops are *no more*, and petticoats *not much:*
Morals and minuets, virtue and her stays,
And tell-tale powder — all have had their days.
The ball begins; the honours of the house
First duly done by daughter or by spouse,
Some potentate — or royal or serene,
With Kent's gay grace or sapient Gloster's mien —
Leads forth the ready dame, whose rising flush
Might once have been mistaken for a blush.
From where the garb just leaves the bosom free,
That spot where hearts were once supposed to be;
Round all the confines of the yielded waist,
The strangest hand may wander undisplaced;
The lady's in return may grasp as much
As princely paunches offer to her touch.
Pleased round the chalky floor how well they trip,
One hand reposing on the royal hip;
The other to the shoulder no less royal
Ascending with affection truly loyal!
Thus front to front the partners move or stand,
The foot may rest, but none withdraw the hand;
And all in turn may follow in their rank,
The Earl of — Asterisk, and Lady — Blank;
Sir — Such-a-one, with those of fashion's host
For whose blest surnames — vide *Morning Post*
(Or if for that impartial print too late,
Search Doctors' Commons six months from my date) —
Thus all and each, in movements swift or slow,
The genial contact gently undergo;
Till some might marvel, with the modest Turk,
If 'nothing follows all this palming work?'
True, honest Mirza! — you may trust my rhyme —
Something does follow at a fitter time;
The breast thus publicly resign'd to man,
In private may resist him — if it can.

O ye who loved our grandmothers of yore,
Fitzpatrick, Sheridan, and many more!
And thou, my prince! whose sovereign taste and will
It is to love the lovely beldames still!
Thou ghost of Queensbury! whose judging sprite
Satan may spare to peep a single night,
Pronounce — if ever in your days of bliss
Asmodeus struck so bright a stroke as this: —
To teach the young ideas how to rise,
Flush in the cheek and languish in the eyes;
Rush to the heart and lighten through the frame,
With half-told wish and ill-dissembled flame,
For prurient nature still will storm the breast —
Who, tempted thus, can answer for the rest?

But ye, who never felt a single thought
For what our morals are to be, or ought;
Who wisely wish the charms you view to reap,
Say — would you make those beauties quite so cheap?

Hot from the hands promiscuously applied,
Round the slight waist or down the glowing side,
Where were the rapture then to clasp the form
From this lewd grasp and lawless contact warm?
At once love's most endearing thought resign,
To press the hand so press'd by none but thine;
To gaze upon that eye which never met
Another's ardent look without regret;
Approach the lip which all, without restraint,
Come near enough — if not to touch — to taint;
If such thou lovest — love her then no more,
Or give, like her, caresses to a score;
Her mind with these is gone, and with it go
The little left behind it to bestow.

Voluptuous Waltz! and dare I thus blaspheme?
Thy bard forgot thy praises were his theme.
Terpsichore, forgive! — at every ball
My wife *now* waltzes, and my daughters *shall*;
My son (or stop — 'tis needless to inquire —
These little accidents should ne'er transpire;
Some ages hence our genealogic tree
Will wear as green a bough for him as me) —
Waltzing shall rear, to make our name amends,
Grandsons for me — in heirs to all his friends.

THE BLUES

A LITERARY ECLOGUE

Nimium ne crede colori. — VIRGIL. [*Ecl.* ii. 17.]

O trust not, ye beautiful creatures, to hue,
Though your *hair* were as *red* as your *stockings* are *blue*.

ECLOGUE FIRST

London — Before the Door of a Lecture Room.

Enter TRACY, *meeting* INKEL.

Ink. You're too late.
Tra. Is it over?
Ink. Nor will be this hour.
But the benches are cramm'd, like a garden in flower,
With the pride of our belles who have made it the fashion;
So, instead of 'beaux arts,' we may say 'la *belle* passion'
For learning, which lately has taken the lead in
The world, and set all the fine gentlemen reading.
Tra. I know it too well, and have worn out my patience
With studying to study your new publications.
There's Vamp, Scamp, and Mouthy, and Wordswords and Co.
With their damnable —
Ink. Hold, my good friend, do you know
Whom you speak to?
Tra. Right well, boy, and so does 'the Row:'
You're an author — a poet —
Ink. And think you that I
Can stand tamely in silence to hear you decry
The Muses?
Tra. Excuse me: I meant no offence
To the Nine; though the number who make some pretence
To their favours is such — but the subject to drop,
I am just piping hot from a publisher's shop
(Next door to the pastry-cook's; so that when I
Cannot find the new volume I wanted to buy
On the bibliopole's shelves, it is only two paces,
As one finds every author in one of those places);
Where I just had been skimming a charming critique,
So studded with wit and so sprinkled with Greek!
Where your friend — you know who — has just got such a threshing,
That it is, as the phrase goes, extremely '*refreshing*.'
What a beautiful word!
Ink. Very true; 'tis so soft
And so cooling — they use it a little too oft;
And the papers have got it at last — but no matter.
So they've cut up our friend then?
Tra. Not left him a tatter —
Not a rag of his present or past reputation,
Which they call a disgrace to the age and the nation.

Ink. I 'm sorry to hear this! for friendship, you know —
Our poor friend! — but I thought it would terminate so.
Our friendship is such, I 'll read nothing to shock it.
You don't happen to have the Review in your pocket?
Tra. No; I left a round dozen of authors and others
(Very sorry, no doubt, since the cause is a brother's)
All scrambling and jostling, like so many imps,
And on fire with impatience to get the next glimpse.
Ink. Let us join them.
Tra. What, won't you return to the lecture?
Ink. Why, the place is so cramm'd, there 's not room for a spectre.
Besides, our friend Scamp is to-day so absurd —
Tra. How can you know that till you hear him?
Ink. I heard
Quite enough; and, to tell you the truth, my retreat
Was from his vile nonsense no less than the heat.
Tra. I have had no great loss then?
Ink. Loss! — such a palaver!
I'd inoculate sooner my wife with the slaver
Of a dog when gone rabid, than listen two hours
To the torrent of trash which around him he pours,
Pump'd up with such effort, disgorged with such labour,
That — come — do not make me speak ill of one's neighbour.
Tra. *I* make you!
Ink. Yes, you! I said nothing until
You compell'd me, by speaking the truth —
Tra. *To speak ill?*
Is that your deduction?
Ink. When speaking of Scamp ill,
I certainly *follow, not set* an example;
The fellow 's a fool, an impostor, a zany.
Tra. And the crowd of to-day shows that one fool makes many.
But we two will be wise.
Ink. Pray, then, let us retire.
Tra. I would, but —
Ink. There must be attraction much higher
Than Scamp, or the Jews' harp he nicknames his lyre,
To call *you* to this hotbed.
Tra. I own it — 't is true —
A fair lady —
Ink. A spinster?
Tra. Miss Lilac!
Ink. The Blue!
The heiress?
Tra. The angel!
Ink. The devil! why, man!
Pray get out of this hobble as fast as you can.
You wed with Miss Lilac! 't would be your perdition:
She 's a poet, a chymist, a mathematician.
Tra. I say she 's an angel.
Ink. Say rather an *angle*.
If you and she marry, you 'll certainly wrangle.
I say she 's a Blue, man, as blue as the ether.
Tra. And is that any cause for not coming together?
Ink. Humph! I can't say I know any happy alliance
Which has lately sprung up from a wedlock with science.
She 's so learned in all things, and fond of concerning
Herself in all matters connected with learning,
That —
Tra. What?
Ink. I perhaps may as well hold my tongue;
But there 's five hundred people can tell you you 're wrong.
Tra. You forget Lady Lilac 's as rich as a Jew.
Ink. Is it miss or the cash of mamma you pursue?
Tra. Why, Jack, I 'll be frank with you — something of both.
The girl 's a fine girl.
Ink. And you feel nothing loth
To her good lady-mother's reversion; and yet
Her life is as good as your own, I will bet.
Tra. Let her live, and as long as she likes; I demand
Nothing more than the heart of her daughter and hand.

Ink. Why, that heart 's in the inkstand — that hand on the pen.
Tra. A propos — Will you write me a song now and then?
Ink. To what purpose?
Tra. You know, my dear friend, that in prose
My talent is decent, as far as it goes;
But in rhyme —
Ink. You 're a terrible stick, to be sure.
Tra. I own it; and yet, in these times, there 's no lure
For the heart of the fair like a stanza or two;
And so, as I can't, will you furnish a few?
Ink. In your name?
Tra. In my name. I will copy them out,
To slip into her hand at the very next rout.
Ink. Are you so far advanced as to hazard this?
Tra. Why,
Do you think me subdued by a Blue-stocking's eye,
So far as to tremble to tell her in rhyme
What I 've told her in prose, at the least, as sublime?
Ink. *As sublime!* If it be so, no need of my Muse.
Tra. But consider, dear Inkel, she 's one of the 'Blues.'
Ink. As sublime! — Mr. Tracy — I 've nothing to say.
Stick to prose — As sublime!! — but I wish you good day.
Tra. Nay, stay, my dear fellow — consider — I 'm wrong;
I own it: but, prithee, compose me the song.
Ink. *As* sublime!!
Tra. I but used the expression in haste.
Ink. That may be, Mr. Tracy, but shows damn'd bad taste.
Tra. I own it — I know it — acknowledge it — what
Can I say to you more?
Ink. I see what you 'd be at:
You disparage my parts with insidious abuse,
Till you think you can turn them best to your own use.
Tra. And is that not a sign I respect them?
Ink. Why that
To be sure makes a difference.
Tra. I know what is what:
And you, who 're a man of the gay world, no less
Than a poet of t' other, may easily guess
That I never could mean, by a word, to offend
A genius like you, and moreover my friend.
Ink. No doubt; you by this time should know what is due
To a man of — but come — let us shake hands.
Tra. You knew,
And you *know*, my dear fellow, how heartily I,
Whatever you publish, am ready to buy.
Ink. That 's my bookseller's business; I care not for sale;
Indeed the best poems at first rather fail.
There were Renegade's epics, and Botherby's plays,
And my own grand romance —
Tra. Had its full share of praise.
I myself saw it puff'd in the *Old Girl's Review*.
Ink. What Review?
Tra. 'T is the English *Journal de Trevoux;*
A clerical work of our jesuits at home.
Have you never yet seen it?
Ink. That pleasure 's to come.
Tra. Make haste then.
Ink. Why so?
Tra. I have heard people say
That it threaten'd to give up the *ghost* t' other day.
Ink. Well, that is a sign of some *spirit*.
Tra. No doubt.
Shall you be at the Countess of Fiddlecome's rout?
Ink. I 've a card, and shall go: but at present, as soon
As friend Scamp shall be pleased to step down from the moon
(Where he seems to be soaring in search of his wits),
And an interval grants from his lecturing fits,
I 'm engaged to the Lady Bluebottle's collation,
To partake of a luncheon and learn'd conversation:
'T is a sort of re-union for Scamp, on the days
Of his lecture, to treat him with cold tongue and praise.

And I own, for my own part, that 't is not unpleasant.
Will you go? There 's Miss Lilac will also be present.
Tra. That 'metal 's attractive.'
Ink. No doubt — to the pocket.
Tra. You should rather encourage my passion than shock it.
But let us proceed; for I think, by the hum —
Ink. Very true; let us go, then, before they can come,
Or else we 'll be kept here an hour at their levy,
On the rack of cross questions, by all the blue bevy.
Hark! Zounds, they 'll be on us; I know by the drone
Of old Botherby's spouting ex-cathedrâ tone.
Ay! there he is at it. Poor Scamp! better join
Your friends, or he 'll pay you back in your own coin.
Tra. All fair; 't is but lecture for lecture.
Ink. That 's clear.
But for God's sake let 's go, or the Bore will be here.
Come, come: nay, I 'm off. [*Exit* Inkel.
Tra. You are right, and I 'll follow;
'T is high time for a '*Sic me servavit Apollo.*'
And yet we shall have the whole crew on our kibes,
Blues, dandies, and dowagers, and second-hand scribes,
All flocking to moisten their exquisite throttles
With a glass of Madeira at Lady Bluebottle's. [*Exit* Tracy.

ECLOGUE SECOND

An Apartment in the House of Lady Bluebottle. — *A Table prepared.*

Sir Richard Bluebottle *solus.*

Was there ever a man who was married so sorry?
Like a fool, I must needs do the thing in a hurry.
My life is reversed and my quiet destroy'd;
My days, which once pass'd in so gentle a void,
Must now, every hour of the twelve, be employ'd:
The twelve, do I say? — of the whole twenty-four,
Is there one which I dare call my own any more?
What with driving and visiting, dancing and dining,
What with learning, and teaching, and scribbling, and shining
In science and art, I 'll be cursed if I know
Myself from my wife; for although we are two,
Yet she somehow contrives that all things shall be done
In a style which proclaims us eternally one.
But the thing of all things which distresses me more
Than the bills of the week (though they trouble me sore),
Is the numerous, humorous, backbiting crew
Of scribblers, wits, lecturers, white, black, and blue,
Who are brought to my house as an inn, to my cost —
For the bill here, it seems, is defray'd by the host:
No pleasure! no leisure! no thought for my pains,
But to hear a vile jargon which addles my brains;
A smatter and chatter, gleaned out of reviews,
By the rag, tag, and bobtail, of those they call 'Blues;'
A rabble who know not — But soft, here they come!
Would to God I were deaf! as I 'm not, I 'll be dumb.

Enter Lady Bluebottle, Miss Lilac, Lady Bluemount, Mr. Botherby, Inkel, Tracy, Miss Mazarine, *and others, with* Scamp *the Lecturer, etc., etc.*

Lady Blueb. Ah! Sir Richard, good morning; I 've brought you some friends.
Sir Rich. (*bows, and afterwards aside*). If friends, they 're the first.
Lady Blueb. But the luncheon attends.
I pray ye be seated, '*sans cérémonie.*'
Mr. Scamp, you 're fatigued; take your chair there, next me. [*They all sit.*
Sir Rich. (*aside*). If he does, his fatigue is to come.

Lady Blueb. Mr. Tracy —
Lady Bluemount—Miss Lilac — be pleased, pray, to place ye;
And you, Mr. Botherby —
Both. Oh, my dear lady!
I obey.
Lady Blueb. Mr. Inkel, I ought to upbraid ye:
You were not at the lecture.
Ink. Excuse me, I was;
But the heat forced me out in the best part — alas!
And when —
Lady Blueb. To be sure it was broiling; but then
You have lost such a lecture!
Both. The best of the ten.
Tra. How can you know that? there are two more.
Both. Because
I defy him to beat this day's wondrous applause.
The very walls shook.
Ink. Oh, if that be the test,
I allow our friend Scamp hath this day done his best.
Miss Lilac, permit me to help you; — a wing?
Miss Lil. No more, sir, I thank you. Who lectures next spring?
Both. Dick Dunder.
Ink. That is, if he lives.
Miss Lil. And why not?
Ink. No reason whatever, save that he 's a sot.
Lady Bluemount! a glass of Madeira?
Lady Bluem. With pleasure.
Ink. How does your friend Wordsworth, that Windermere treasure?
Does he stick to his lakes, like the leeches he sings,
And their gatherers, as Homer sung warriors and kings?
Lady Blueb. He has just got a place.
Ink. As a footman?
Lady Bluem. For shame!
Nor profane with your sneers so poetic a name.
Ink. Nay, I meant him no evil, but pitied his master;
For the poet of pedlers 't were, sure, no disaster
To wear a new livery; the more, as 't is not
The first time he has turn'd both his creed and his coat.
Lady Bluem. For shame! I repeat. If Sir George could but hear —
Lady Blueb. Never mind our friend Inkel; we all know, my dear,
'T is his way.
Sir Rich. But this place —
Ink. Is perhaps like friend Scamp's,
A lecturer's.
Lady Blueb. Excuse me — 't is one in 'the Stamps;'
He is made a collector.
Tra. Collector!
Sir Rich. How?
Miss Lil. What?
Ink. I shall think of him oft when I buy a new hat:
There his works will appear —
Lady Bluem. Sir, they reach to the Ganges.
Ink. I shan't go so far — I can have them at Grange's.
Lady Blueb. Oh, fie!
Miss Lil. And for shame!
Lady Bluem. You 're too bad.
Both. Very good!
Lady Bluem. How good?
Lady Blueb. He means nought — 't is his phrase.
Lady Bluem. He grows rude.
Lady Blueb. He means nothing; nay, ask him.
Lady Bluem. Pray, sir! did you mean
What you say?
Ink. Never mind if he did; 't will be seen
That whatever he means won't alloy what he says.
Both. Sir!
Ink. Pray be content with your portion of praise;
'T was in your defence.
Both. If you please, with submission,
I can make out my own.
Ink. It would be your perdition.
While you live, my dear Botherby, never defend
Yourself or your works; but leave both to a friend.
A propos — Is your play then accepted at last?
Both. At last?
Ink. Why I thought — that 's to say — there had pass'd
A few green-room whispers, which hinted — you know
That the taste of the actors at best is so so

Both. Sir, the green-room's in rapture, and so's the committee.
Ink. Ay — yours are the plays for exciting our 'pity
And fear,' as the Greek says: for 'purging the mind,'
I doubt if you'll leave us an equal behind.
Both. I have written the prologue, and meant to have pray'd
For a spice of your wit in an epilogue's aid.
Ink. Well, time enough yet, when the play's to be play'd.
Is it cast yet?
Both. The actors are fighting for parts,
As is usual in that most litigious of arts.
Lady Blueb. We'll all make a party, and go the *first* night.
Tra. And you promised the epilogue, Inkel.
Ink. Not quite.
However, to save my friend Botherby trouble,
I'll do what I can, though my pains must be double.
Tra. Why so?
Ink. To do justice to what goes before.
Both. Sir, I'm happy to say, I have no fears on that score.
Your parts, Mr. Inkel, are —
Ink. Never mind *mine;*
Stick to those of your play, which is quite your own line.
Lady Bluem. You're a fugitive writer, I think, sir, of rhymes?
Ink. Yes, ma'am; and a fugitive reader sometimes.
On Wordswords, for instance, I seldom alight,
Or on Mouthey, his friend, without taking to flight.
Lady Bluem. Sir, your taste is too common; but time and posterity
Will right these great men, and this age's severity
Become its reproach.
Ink. I've no sort of objection,
So I'm not of the party to take the infection.
Lady Blueb. Perhaps they have doubts that they ever will *take?*
Ink. Not at all; on the contrary, those of the lake
Have taken already, and still will continue
To take — what they can, from a groat to a guinea,
Of pension or place; — but the subject's a bore.
Lady Bluem. Well, sir, the time's coming.
Ink. Scamp! don't you feel sore?
What say you to this?
Scamp. They have merit, I own;
Though their system's absurdity keeps it unknown.
Ink. Then why not unearth it in one of your lectures?
Scamp. It is only time past which comes under my strictures.
Lady Blueb. Come, a truce with all tartness: — the joy of my heart
Is to see Nature's triumph o'er all that is art.
Wild Nature! — Grand Shakspeare!
Both. And down Aristotle!
Lady Bluem. Sir George thinks exactly with Lady Bluebottle;
And my Lord Seventy-four, who protects our dear Bard,
And who gave him his place, has the greatest regard
For the poet, who, singing of pedlers and asses,
Has found out the way to dispense with Parnassus.
Tra. And you, Scamp! —
Scamp. I needs must confess I'm embarrass'd.
Ink. Don't call upon Scamp, who's already so harass'd
With old *schools*, and new *schools*, and no *schools*, and all *schools*.
Tra. Well, one thing is certain, that *some* must be fools.
I should like to know who.
Ink. And I should not be sorry
To know who are *not:* — it would save us some worry.
Lady Blueb. A truce with remark, and let nothing control
This 'feast of our reason, and flow of the soul.'
Oh! my dear Mr. Botherby! sympathise! — I
Now feel such a rapture, I'm ready to fly,
I feel so elastic — '*so buoyant — so buoyant!*'
Ink. Tracy! open the window.
Tra. I wish her much joy on't.
Both. For God's sake, my Lady Bluebottle, check not
This gentle emotion, so seldom our lot

Upon earth. Give it way; 't is an impulse which lifts
Our spirits from earth; the sublimest of gifts;
For which poor Prometheus was chain'd to his mountain;
'T is the source of all sentiment — feeling's true fountain;
'T is the vision of Heaven upon Earth; 't is the gas
Of the soul; 't is the seizing of shades as they pass,
And making them substance; 't is something divine; —
Ink. Shall I help you, my friend, to a little more wine?
Both. I thank you; not any more, sir, till I dine.
Ink. A propos — Do you dine with Sir Humphry to-day?
Tra. I should think with *Duke* Humphry was more in your way.
Ink. It might be of yore; but we authors now look
To the knight, as a landlord, much more than the Duke.
The truth is, each writer now quite at his ease is,
And (except with his publisher) dines where he pleases.
But 't is now nearly five, and I must to the Park.
Tra. And I 'll take a turn with you there till 't is dark.
And you, Scamp —
Scamp. Excuse me; I must to my notes,
For my lecture next week.
Ink. He must mind whom he quotes
Out of 'Elegant Extracts.'
Lady Blueb. Well, now we break up;
But remember Miss Diddle invites us to sup.
Ink. Then at two hours past midnight we all meet again,
For the sciences, sandwiches, hock, and champagne!
Tra. And the sweet lobster salad!
Both. I honour that meal;
For 't is then that our feelings most genuinely — feel.
Ink. True; feeling is truest *then*, far beyond question:
I wish to the gods 't was the same with digestion!
Lady Blueb. Pshaw! — never mind that; for one moment of feeling
Is worth — God knows what.
Ink. 'T is at least worth concealing
For itself, or what follows — But here comes your carriage.
Sir Rich. (*aside*). I wish all these people were d——d with *my* marriage!
[*Exeunt.*

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

BY QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS

SUGGESTED BY THE COMPOSITION SO ENTITLED BY THE AUTHOR OF 'WAT TYLER'

'A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.'

PREFACE

It hath been wisely said, that 'One fool makes many;' and it hath been poetically observed,

'That fools rush in where angels fear to tread.' — POPE.

If Mr. Southey had not rushed in where he had no business, and where he never was before, and never will be again, the following poem would not have been written. It is not impossible that it may be as good as his own, seeing that it cannot, by any species of stupidity, natural or acquired, be *worse*. The gross flattery, the dull impudence, the renegado intolerance and impious cant, of the poem by the author of *Wat Tyler*, are something so stupendous as to form the sublime of himself — containing the quintessence of his own attributes.

So much for his poem — a word on his preface. In this preface it has pleased the magnanimous Laureate to draw the picture of a supposed 'Satanic School,' the which he doth recommend to the notice of the legislature; thereby adding to his other laurels the ambition of those of an informer. If there exists anywhere, excepting in his imagination, such a School, is he not sufficiently armed against it by his own intense vanity? The truth is, that there are certain writers whom Mr. S. imagines, like Scrub, to have 'talked of *him*; for they laughed consumedly.'

I think I know enough of most of the writers to whom he is supposed to allude, to assert, that they, in their individual capacities, have done more good, in the charities of life, to their fellow-creatures in any one year, than Mr. Southey has done harm to himself by his absurdities in his whole life; and this is saying a great deal. But I have a few questions to ask.

1stly. Is Mr. Southey the author of *Wat Tyler*?

2ndly. Was he not refused a remedy at law by the highest judge of his beloved England, because it was a blasphemous and seditious publication?

3rdly. Was he not entitled by William Smith, in full parliament, 'a rancorous renegado'?

4thly. Is he not poet laureate, with his own lines on Martin the regicide staring him in the face?

And, 5thly. Putting the four preceding items together, with what conscience dare *he* call the attention of the laws to the publications of others, be they what they may?

I say nothing of the cowardice of such a proceeding; its meanness speaks for itself; but I wish to touch upon the *motive*, which is neither more nor less than that Mr. S. has been laughed at a little in some recent publications, as he was of yore in the *Anti-jacobin* by his present patrons. Hence all this 'skimble-scamble stuff' about 'Satanic,' and so forth. However, it is worthy of him — '*qualis ab incepto*.'

If there is anything obnoxious to the political opinions of a portion of the public in the following poem, they may thank Mr. Southey. He might have written hexameters, as he has written everything else, for aught that the writer cared — had they been upon another subject. But to attempt to canonise a monarch, who, whatever were his household virtues, was neither a successful nor a patriot king, — inasmuch as several years of his reign passed in war with America and Ireland, to say nothing of the aggression upon France, — like all other exaggeration, necessarily begets opposition. In whatever manner he may be spoken of in this new 'Vision,' his *public* career will not be more favourably transmitted by history. Of his private virtues (although a little expensive to the nation) there can be no doubt.

With regard to the supernatural personages treated of, I can only say that I know as much about them, and (as an honest man) have a better right to talk of them than Robert Southey. I have also treated them more tolerantly. The way in which that poor insane creature, the Laureate, deals about his judgments in the next world, is like his own judgment in this. If it was not completely ludicrous, it would be something worse. I don't think that there is much more to say at present.

Quevedo Redivivus.

P. S. — It is possible that some readers may object, in these objectionable times, to the freedom with which saints, angels, and spiritual persons discourse in this 'Vision.' But, for precedents upon such points, I must refer him to Fielding's *Journey from this World to the next*, and to the Visions of myself, the said Quevedo, in Spanish or translated. The reader is also requested to observe, that no doctrinal tenets are insisted upon or discussed; that the person of the Deity is carefully withheld from sight, which is more than can be said for the Laureate, who hath thought proper to make him talk, not 'like a school divine,' but like the unscholarlike Mr. Southey. The whole action passes on the outside of heaven; and Chaucer's *Wife of Bath*, Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore*, Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, and the other works above referred to, are cases in point of the freedom with which saints, etc., may be permitted to converse in works not intended to be serious. Q. R.

⁂ Mr. Southey being, as he says, a good Christian and vindictive, threatens, I understand, a reply to this our answer. It is to be hoped that his visionary faculties will in the mean time have acquired a little more judgment, properly so called: otherwise he will get himself into new dilemmas. These apostate jacobins furnish rich rejoinders. Let him take a specimen: Mr. Southey laudeth grievously 'one Mr. Landor,' who cultivates much private renown in the shape of Latin verses; and not long ago, the poet laureate dedicated to him, it appeareth, one of his fugitive lyrics, upon the strength of a poem called *Gebir*. Who could suppose, that in this same *Gebir* the aforesaid Savage Landor (for such is his grim cognomen) putteth into the infernal regions no less a person than the hero of his friend Mr. Southey's heaven, — yea, even George the Third! See also how personal Savage becometh, when he hath a mind. The following is his portrait of our late gracious sovereign: —

(Prince Gebir having descended into the infernal regions, the shades of his royal ancestors are, at his request, called up to his view; and he exclaims to his ghostly guide) —

'Aroar, what wretch that nearest us? what wretch
Is that with eyebrows white and slanting brow?
Listen! him yonder, who, bound down supine,
Shrinks yelling from that sword there, engine-hung.
He too amongst my ancestors! I hate
The despot, but the dastard I despise.
Was he our countryman?'

'Alas, O king!
Iberia bore him, but the breed accurst
Inclement winds blew blighting from northeast.'
'He was a warrior then nor fear'd the gods?'
'Gebir, he fear'd the demons, not the gods,
Though them indeed his daily face adored;
And was no warrior, yet the thousand lives
Squander'd, as stones to exercise a sling,
And the tame cruelty and cold caprice —
Oh, madness of mankind! address'd, adored!' —
Gebir, p. 28.

I omit noticing some edifying Ithyphallics of Savagius, wishing to keep the proper veil over them, if his grave but somewhat indiscreet worshipper will suffer it; but certainly these teachers of 'great moral lessons' are apt to be found in strange company.

I

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate:
His keys were rusty and the lock was dull,
So little trouble had been given of late;
Not that the place by any means was full,
But since the Gallic era 'eighty-eight'
The devils had ta'en a longer, stronger pull,
And 'a pull all together,' as they say
At sea — which drew most souls another way.

II

The angels all were singing out of tune,
And hoarse with having little else to do,
Excepting to wind up the sun and moon,
Or curb a runaway young star or two,
Or wild colt of a comet, which too soon
Broke out of bounds o'er the ethereal blue,
Splitting some planet with its playful tail,
As boats are sometimes by a wanton whale.

III

The guardian seraphs had retired on high,
Finding their charges past all care below;
Terrestrial business fill'd nought in the sky
Save the recording angel's black bureau;
Who found, indeed, the facts to multiply
With such rapidity of vice and wo,
That he had stripp'd off both his wings in quills,
And yet was in arrear of human ills.

IV

His business so augmented of late years,
That he was forced, against his will no doubt
(Just like those cherubs, earthly ministers),
For some resource to turn himself about,
And claim the help of his celestial peers,
To aid him ere he should be quite worn out
By the increased demand for his remarks;
Six angels and twelve saints were named his clerks.

V

This was a handsome board — at least for heaven;
And yet they had even then enough to do,
So many conquerors' cars were daily driven,
So many kingdoms fitted up anew;
Each day too slew its thousands six or seven,
Till at the crowning carnage, Waterloo,
They threw their pens down in divine disgust —
The page was so besmear'd with blood and dust.

VI

This by the way; 't is not mine to record
What angels shrink from: even the very devil
On this occasion his own work abhorr'd,
So surfeited with the infernal revel:
Though he himself had sharpen'd every sword,
It almost quench'd his innate thirst of evil.
(Here Satan's sole good work deserves insertion —
'T is, that he has both generals in reversion.)

VII

Let 's skip a few short years of hollow peace,
Which peopled earth no better, hell as wont,
And heaven none — they form the tyrant's lease,
With nothing but new names subscribed upon 't:
'T will one day finish: meantime they increase,
'With seven heads and ten horns,' and all in front,
Like Saint John's foretold beast; but ours are born
Less formidable in the head than horn.

VIII

In the first year of freedom's second dawn
Died George the Third; although no tyrant, one
Who shielded tyrants, till each sense withdrawn
Left him nor mental nor external sun:

A better farmer ne'er brush'd dew from lawn,
A worse king never left a realm undone!
He died — but left his subjects still behind,
One half as mad, and t' other no less blind.

IX

He died! — his death made no great stir on earth;
His burial made some pomp; there was profusion
Of velvet, gilding, brass, and no great dearth
Of aught but tears — save those shed by collusion;
For these things may be bought at their true worth;
Of elegy there was the due infusion —
Bought also; and the torches, cloaks, and banners,
Heralds, and relics of old Gothic manners,

X

Form'd a sepulchral melodrame. Of all
The fools who flock'd to swell or see the show.
Who cared about the corpse? The funeral
Made the attraction, and the black the wo.
There throbb'd not there a thought which pierced the pall;
And when the gorgeous coffin was laid low,
It seem'd the mockery of hell to fold
The rottenness of eighty years in gold.

XI

So mix his body with the dust! It might
Return to what it *must* far sooner, were
The natural compound left alone to fight
Its way back into earth, and fire, and air;
But the unnatural balsams merely blight
What nature made him at his birth, as bare
As the mere million's base unmummied clay —
Yet all his spices but prolong decay.

XII

He 's dead — and upper earth with him has done;
He 's buried; save the undertaker's bill
Or lapidary scrawl, the world is gone
For him, unless he left a German will;
But where 's the proctor who will ask his son?
In whom his qualities are reigning still,
Except that household virtue, most uncommon,
Of constancy to a bad, ugly woman.

XIII

'God save the king!' It is a large economy
In God to save the like; but if he will
Be saving, all the better; for not one am I
Of those who think damnation better still:
I hardly know too if not quite alone am I
In this small hope of bettering future ill
By circumscribing, with some slight restriction,
The eternity of hell's hot jurisdiction.

XIV

I know this is unpopular; I know
'T is blasphemous; I know one may be damn'd
For hoping no one else may e'er be so;
I know my catechism; I know we are cramm'd
With the best doctrines till we quite o'erflow;
I know that all save England's church have shamm'd,
And that the other twice two hundred churches
And synagogues have made a *damn'd* bad purchase.

XV

God help us all! God help me too! I am,
God knows, as helpless as the devil can wish,
And not a whit more difficult to damn
Than is to bring to land a late-hook'd fish,
Or to the butcher to purvey the lamb;
Not that I 'm fit for such a noble dish,
As one day will be that immortal fry
Of almost every body born to die.

XVI

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate,
And nodded o'er his keys; when, lo! there came
A wondrous noise he had not heard of late —
A rushing sound of wind, and stream, and flame;

In short, a roar of things extremely great,
Which would have made aught save a saint exclaim;
But he, with first a start and then a wink,
Said, 'There's another star gone out, I think!'

XVII

But ere he could return to his repose,
A cherub flapp'd his right wing o'er his eyes —
At which Saint Peter yawn'd, and rubb'd his nose:
'Saint porter,' said the angel, 'prithee rise!'
Waving a goodly wing, which glow'd, as glows
An earthly peacock's tail, with heavenly dyes:
To which the saint replied, 'Well, what's the matter?
Is Lucifer come back with all this clatter?'

XVIII

'No,' quoth the cherub; 'George the Third is dead.'
'And who *is* George the Third?' replied the apostle:
'*What George? what Third?*' 'The king of England,' said
The angel. 'Well! he won't find kings to jostle
Him on his way; but does he wear his head?
Because the last we saw here had a tussle,
And ne'er would have got into heaven's good graces,
Had he not flung his head in all our faces.

XIX

'He was, if I remember, king of France;
That head of his, which could not keep a crown
On earth, yet ventured in my face to advance
A claim to those of martyrs — like my own:
If I had had my sword, as I had once
When I cut ears off, I had cut him down;
But having but my *keys*, and not my brand,
I only knock'd his head from out his hand.

XX

'And then he set up such a headless howl,
That all the saints came out and took him in;
And there he sits by St. Paul, cheek by jowl;
That fellow Paul — the parvenu! The skin
Of Saint Bartholomew, which makes his cowl
In heaven, and upon earth redeem'd his sin
So as to make a martyr, never sped
Better than did this weak and wooden head.

XXI

'But had it come up here upon its shoulders,
There would have been a different tale to tell:
The fellow-feeling in the saints beholders
Seems to have acted on them like a spell;
And so this very foolish head heaven solders
Back on its trunk: it may be very well,
And seems the custom here to overthrow
Whatever has been wisely done below.'

XXII

The angel answer'd, 'Peter! do not pout:
The king who comes has head and all entire,
And never knew much what it was about;
He did as doth the puppet — by its wire,
And will be judged like all the rest, no doubt:
My business and your own is not to enquire
Into such matters, but to mind our cue —
Which is to act as we are bid to do.'

XXIII

While thus they spake, the angelic caravan,
Arriving like a rush of mighty wind,
Cleaving the fields of space, as doth the swan
Some silver stream (say Ganges, Nile, or Inde,
Or Thames, or Tweed), and 'midst them an old man
With an old soul, and both extremely blind,
Halted before the gate, and in his shroud
Seated their fellow-traveller on a cloud.

XXIV

But bringing up the rear of this bright host
A Spirit of a different aspect waved
His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved;
His brow was like the deep when tempest-toss'd;
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
And *where* he gazed a gloom pervaded space.

XXV

As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate
Ne'er to be enter'd more by him or sin,
With such a glance of supernatural hate,
As made Saint Peter wish himself within;
He patter'd with his keys at a great rate,
And sweated through his apostolic skin:
Of course his perspiration was but ichor,
Or some such other spiritual liquor.

XXVI

The very cherubs huddled all together,
Like birds when soars the falcon; and they felt
A tingling to the tip of every feather,
And form'd a circle like Orion's belt
Around their poor old charge; who scarce knew whither
His guards had led him, though they gently dealt
With royal manes (for by many stories,
And true, we learn the angels are all Tories).

XXVII

As things were in this posture, the gate flew
Asunder, and the flashing of its hinges
Flung over space an universal hue
Of many-colour'd flame, until its tinges
Reach'd even our speck of earth, and made a new
Aurora borealis spread its fringes
O'er the North Pole; the same seen, when ice-bound,
By Captain Parry's crew, in 'Melville's Sound.'

XXVIII

And from the gate thrown open issued beaming
A beautiful and mighty Thing of Light,
Radiant with glory, like a banner streaming
Victorious from some world-o'erthrowing fight:
My poor comparisons must needs be teeming
With earthly likenesses, for here the night
Of clay obscures our best conceptions, saving
Johanna Southcote or Bob Southey raving.

XXIX

'T was the archangel Michael: all men know
The make of angels and archangels, since
There 's scarce a scribbler has not one to show,
From the fiends' leader to the angels' prince.
There also are some altar-pieces, though
I really can't say that they much evince
One's inner notions of immortal spirits;
But let the connoisseurs explain *their* merits.

XXX

Michael flew forth in glory and in good;
A goodly work of him from whom all glory
And good arise; the portal past — he stood;
Before him the young cherubs and saints hoary —
(I say *young*, begging to be understood
By looks, not years; and should be very sorry
To state, they were not older than St. Peter,
But merely that they seem'd a little sweeter).

XXXI

The cherubs and the saints bow'd down before
That arch-angelic hierarch, the first
Of essences angelical, who wore
The aspect of a god; but this ne'er nursed
Pride in his heavenly bosom, in whose core
No thought, save for his Maker's service, durst
Intrude, however glorified and high;
He knew him but the viceroy of the sky.

XXXII

He and the sombre silent Spirit met —
They knew each other both for good and ill;
Such was their power, that neither could forget
His former friend and future foe; but still
There was a high, immortal, proud regret
In either's eye, as if 't were less their will
Than destiny to make the eternal years
Their date of war, and their 'champ clos' the spheres.

XXXIII

But here they were in neutral space: we know
From Job, that Satan hath the power to pay
A heavenly visit thrice a year or so;
And that 'the sons of God,' like those of clay,
Must keep him company; and we might show
From the same book, in how polite a way
The dialogue is held between the Powers
Of Good and Evil — but 't would take up hours.

XXXIV

And this is not a theologic tract,
To prove with Hebrew and with Arabic
If Job be allegory or a fact,
But a true narrative; and thus I pick
From out the whole but such and such an act
As sets aside the slightest thought of trick.
'T is every tittle true, beyond suspicion,
And accurate as any other vision.

XXXV

The spirits were in neutral space, before
The gate of heaven; like eastern thresholds is
The place where Death's grand cause is argued o'er,
And souls despatch'd to that world or to this;
And therefore Michael and the other wore
A civil aspect: though they did not kiss,
Yet still between his Darkness and his Brightness
There pass'd a mutual glance of great politeness.

XXXVI

The Archangel bow'd, not like a modern beau,
But with a graceful oriental bend,
Pressing one radiant arm just where below
The heart in good men is supposed to tend.
He turn'd as to an equal not too low,
But kindly; Satan met his ancient friend
With more hauteur, as might an old Castilian
Poor noble meet a mushroom rich civilian.

XXXVII

He merely bent his diabolic brow
An instant; and then raising it, he stood
In act to assert his right or wrong, and show
Cause why King George by no means could or should
Make out a case to be exempt from woe
Eternal, more than other kings, endued
With better sense and hearts, whom history mentions,
Who long have 'paved hell with their good intentions.'

XXXVIII

Michael began: 'What wouldst thou with this man,
Now dead, and brought before the Lord? What ill
Hath he wrought since his mortal race began,
That thou canst claim him? Speak! and do thy will,
If it be just: if in his earthly span
He hath been greatly failing to fulfil
His duties as a king and mortal, say,
And he is thine; if not, let him have way.'

XXXIX

'Michael!' replied the Prince of Air, 'even here,
Before the Gate of him thou servest, must
I claim my subject: and will make appear
That as he was my worshipper in dust,
So shall he be in spirit, although dear
To thee and thine, because nor wine nor lust
Were of his weaknesses; yet on the throne
He reign'd o'er millions to serve me alone

XL

'Look to *our* earth, or rather *mine;* it was,
Once, more thy master's: but I triumph not
In this poor planet's conquest; nor, alas!
Need he thou servest envy me my lot:
With all the myriads of bright worlds which pass
In worship round him, he may have forgot
Yon weak creation of such paltry things:
I think few worth damnation save their kings, —

XLI

'And these but as a kind of quit-rent, to
Assert my right as lord; and even had
I such an inclination, 't were (as you
Well know) superfluous; they are grown so bad,
That hell has nothing better left to do
Than leave them to themselves: so much more mad
And evil by their own internal curse,
Heaven cannot make them better, nor I worse.

XLII

'Look to the earth, I said, and say again:
When this old, blind, mad, helpless, weak, poor worm
Began in youth's first bloom and flush to reign,
The world and he both wore a different form,
And much of earth and all the watery plain
Of ocean call'd him king: through many a storm
His isles had floated on the abyss of time;
For the rough virtues chose them for their clime.

XLIII

'He came to his sceptre young; he leaves it old:
Look to the state in which he found his realm,
And left it; and his annals too behold,
How to a minion first he gave the helm;
How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold,
The beggar's vice, which can but overwhelm
The meanest hearts; and for the rest, but glance
Thine eye along America and France.

XLIV

''T is true, he was a tool from first to last
(I have the workmen safe); but as a tool
So let him be consumed. From out the past
Of ages, since mankind have known the rule
Of monarchs — from the bloody rolls amass'd
Of sin and slaughter — from the Cæsar's school,
Take the worst pupil; and produce a reign
More drench'd with gore, more cumber'd with the slain.

XLV

'He ever warr'd with freedom and the free:
Nations as men, home subjects, foreign foes,
So that they utter'd the word "Liberty!"
Found George the Third their first opponent. Whose
History was ever stain'd as his will be
With national and individual woes?
I grant his household abstinence; I grant
His neutral virtues, which most monarchs want;

XLVI

'I know he was a constant consort; own
He was a decent sire, and middling lord.
All this is much, and most upon a throne;
As temperance, if at Apicius' board,
Is more than at an anchorite's supper shown.
I grant him all the kindest can accord;
And this was well for him, but not for those
Millions who found him what oppression chose.

XLVII

'The New World shook him off; the Old yet groans
Beneath what he and his prepared, if not
Completed: he leaves heirs on many thrones
To all his vices, without what begot
Compassion for him — his tame virtues; drones
Who sleep, or despots who have now forgot
A lesson which shall be re-taught them, wake
Upon the thrones of earth; but let them quake!

XLVIII

'Five millions of the primitive, who hold
The faith which makes ye great on earth, implored
A *part* of that vast *all* they held of old, —
Freedom to worship — not alone your Lord,
Michael, but you, and you, Saint Peter! Cold
Must be your souls, if you have not abhorr'd
The foe to Catholic participation
In all the license of a Christian nation.

XLIX

'True! he allow'd them to pray God: but as
A consequence of prayer, refused the law
Which would have placed them upon the same base
With those who did not hold the saints in awe.'
But here Saint Peter started from his place,
And cried, 'You may the prisoner withdraw:
Ere heaven shall ope her portals to this Guelph,
While I am guard, may I be damn'd myself!

L

'Sooner will I with Cerberus exchange
My office (and *his* is no sinecure)
Than see this royal Bedlam bigot range
The azure fields of heaven, of that be sure!'
'Saint!' replied Satan, 'you do well to avenge
The wrongs he made your satellites endure;
And if to this exchange you should be given,
I 'll try to coax *our* Cerberus up to heaven.'

LI

Here Michael interposed: 'Good saint! and devil!
Pray, not so fast; you both outrun discretion.
Saint Peter, you were wont to be more civil:
Satan, excuse this warmth of his expression,
And condescension to the vulgar's level:
Even saints sometimes forget themselves in session.
Have you got more to say?' — 'No.' — 'If you please,
I 'll trouble you to call your witnesses.'

LII

Then Satan turn'd and waved his swarthy hand,
Which stirr'd with its electric qualities
Clouds farther off than we can understand,
Although we find him sometimes in our skies;
Infernal thunder shook both sea and land
In all the planets, and hell's batteries
Let off the artillery, which Milton mentions
As one of Satan's most sublime inventions.

LIII

This was a signal unto such damn'd souls
As have the privilege of their damnation
Extended far beyond the mere controls
Of worlds past, present, or to come; no station
Is theirs particularly in the rolls
Of hell assign'd; but where their inclination
Or business carries them in search of game,
They may range freely — being damn'd the same.

LIV

They are proud of this — as very well they may,
It being a sort of knighthood, or gilt key
Stuck in their loins; or like to an 'entré'
Up the back stairs, or such freemasonry.
I borrow my comparisons from clay,
Being clay myself. Let not those spirits be
Offended with such base low likenesses;
We know their posts are nobler far than these.

LV

When the great signal ran from heaven to hell,
About ten million times the distance reckon'd
From our sun to its earth, — as we can tell
How much time it takes up, even to a second,
For every ray that travels to dispel
The fogs of London, through which, dimly beacon'd,
The weathercocks are gilt some thrice a year,
If that the *summer* is not too severe: —

LVI

I say that I can tell — 't was half a minute:
I know the solar beams take up more time
Ere, pack'd up for their journey, they begin it;
But then their telegraph is less sublime,
And if they ran a race, they would not win it
'Gainst Satan's couriers bound for their own clime.
The sun takes up some years for every ray
To reach its goal — the devil not half a day.

LVII

Upon the verge of space, about the size
Of half-a-crown, a little speck appear'd
(I 've seen a something like it in the skies
In the Ægean, ere a squall); it near'd,
And, growing bigger, took another guise;
Like an aërial ship it tack'd, and steer'd,
Or *was* steer'd (I am doubtful of the grammar
Of the late phrase, which makes the stanza stammer; —

LVIII

But take your choice); and then it grew a cloud;
And so it was — a cloud of witnesses.
But such a cloud! No land e'er saw a crowd
Of locusts numerous as the heavens saw these;
They shadow'd with their myriads space; their loud
And varied cries were like those of wild geese
(If nations may be liken'd to a goose),
And realised the phrase of 'hell broke loose.'

LIX

Here crash'd a sturdy oath of stout John Bull,
Who damn'd away his eyes as heretofore:
There Paddy brogued 'By Jasus!' — 'What 's your wull?'
The temperate Scot exclaim'd: the French ghost swore
In certain terms I shan't translate in full,
As the first coachman will; and 'midst the war,
The voice of Jonathan was heard to express,
'*Our* president is going to war, I guess.'

LX

Besides there were the Spaniard, Dutch, and Dane;
In short, an universal shoal of shades,
From Otaheite's isle to Salisbury Plain,
Of all climes and professions, years and trades,
Ready to swear against the good king's reign,
Bitter as clubs in cards are against spades:
All summon'd by this grand 'subpœna,' to
Try if kings may n't be damn'd like me or you.

LXI

When Michael saw this host, he first grew pale,
As angels can; next, like Italian twilight,
He turn'd all colours — as a peacock's tail,
Or sunset streaming through a Gothic skylight
In some old abbey, or a trout not stale,
Or distant lightning on the horizon *by* night,
Or a fresh rainbow, or a grand review
Of thirty regiments in red, green, and blue.

LXII

Then he address'd himself to Satan: 'Why —
My good old friend, for such I deem you; though
Our different parties make us fight so shy,
I ne'er mistake you for a *personal* foe;
Our difference is *political*, and I
Trust that, whatever may occur below,
You know my great respect for you: and this
Makes me regret whate'er you do amiss —

LXIII

'Why, my dear Lucifer, would you abuse
My call for witnesses? I did not mean
That you should half of earth and hell produce;
'T is even superfluous, since two honest, clean,
True testimonies are enough: we lose
Our time, nay, our eternity, between
The accusation and defence: if we
Hear both, 't will stretch our immortality.'

LXIV

Satan replied, 'To me the matter is
Indifferent, in a personal point of view:

I can have fifty better souls than this
With far less trouble than we have gone through
Already; and I merely argued his
Late majesty of Britain's case with you
Upon a point of form: you may dispose
Of him; I 've kings enough below, God knows!'

LXV

Thus spoke the Demon (late call'd 'multi-faced'
By multo-scribbling Southey). — 'Then we 'll call
One or two persons of the myriads placed
Around our congress, and dispense with all
The rest,' quoth Michael: 'Who may be so graced
As to speak first? there 's choice enough — who shall
It be?' Then Satan answer'd, 'There are many;
But you may choose Jack Wilkes as well as any.'

LXVI

A merry, cock-eyed, curious-looking sprite
Upon the instant started from the throng,
Dress'd in a fashion now forgotten quite;
For all the fashions of the flesh stick long
By people in the next world; where unite
All the costumes since Adam's, right or wrong,
From Eve's fig-leaf down to the petticoat,
Almost as scanty, of days less remote.

LXVII

The spirit look'd around upon the crowds
Assembled, and exclaim'd, 'My friends of all
The spheres, we shall catch cold amongst these clouds;
So lets 's to business: why this general call?
If those are freeholders I see in shrouds,
And 't is for an election that they bawl,
Behold a candidate with unturn'd coat!
Saint Peter, may I count upon your vote?'

LXVIII

'Sir,' replied Michael, 'you mistake; these things
Are of a former life, and what we do
Above is more august; to judge of kings
Is the tribunal met: so now you know.'
'Then I presume those gentlemen with wings,'
Said Wilkes, 'are cherubs; and that sou below
Looks much like George the Third, but to my mind
A good deal older—Bless me! is he blind?'

LXIX

'He is what you behold him, and his doom
Depends upon his deeds,' the Angel said.
'If you have aught to arraign in him, the tomb
Gives license to the humblest beggar's head
To lift itself against the loftiest.'—'Some,'
Said Wilkes, 'don't wait to see them laid in lead,
For such a liberty — and I, for one,
Have told them what I thought beneath the sun.'

LXX

'*Above* the sun repeat, then, what thou hast
To urge against him,' said the Archangel. 'Why,'
Replied the spirit, 'since old scores are past,
Must I turn evidence? In faith, not I.
Besides, I beat him hollow at the last,
With all his Lords and Commons: in the sky
I don't like ripping up old stories, since
His conduct was but natural in a prince:

LXXI

'Foolish, no doubt, and wicked, to oppress
A poor unlucky devil without a shilling;
But then I blame the man himself much less
Than Bute and Grafton, and shall be unwilling
To see him punish'd here for their excess,
Since they were both damn'd long ago, and still in
Their place below: for me, I have forgiven,
And vote his "habeas corpus" into heaven.'

LXXII

'Wilkes,' said the Devil, 'I understand all this;
You turn'd to half a courtier ere you died,
And seem to think it would not be amiss
To grow a whole one on the other side

Of Charon's ferry; you forget that *his*
Reign is concluded; whatsoe'er betide,
He won't be sovereign more: you 've lost your labour,
For at the best he will but be your neighbour.

LXXIII

'However, I knew what to think of it,
When I beheld you in your jesting way
Flitting and whispering round about the spit
Where Belial, upon duty for the day,
With Fox's lard was basting William Pitt,
His pupil; I knew what to think, I say:
That fellow even in hell breeds farther ills;
I 'll have him *gagg'd* — 't was one of his own bills.

LXXIV

'Call Junius!' From the crowd a shadow stalk'd,
And at the name there was a general squeeze,
So that the very ghosts no longer walk'd
In comfort, at their own aërial ease,
But were all ramm'd and jamm'd (but to be balk'd,
As we shall see), and jostled hands and knees,
Like wind compress'd and pent within a bladder,
Or like a human colic, which is sadder.

LXXV

The shadow came — a tall, thin, gray-hair'd figure,
That look'd as it had been a shade on earth;
Quick in its motions, with an air of vigour,
But nought to mark its breeding or its birth:
Now it wax'd little, then again grew bigger,
With now an air of gloom, or savage mirth;
But as you gazed upon its features, they
Changed every instant — to *what*, none could say.

LXXVI

The more intently the ghosts gazed, the less
Could they distinguish whose the features were;
The Devil himself seem'd puzzled even to guess;
They varied like a dream — now here, now there;
And several people swore from out the press,
They knew him perfectly; and one could swear
He was his father: upon which another
Was sure he was his mother's cousin's brother:

LXXVII

Another, that he was a duke, or knight,
An orator, a lawyer, or a priest,
A nabob, a man-midwife: but the wight
Mysterious changed his countenance at least
As oft as they their minds: though in full sight
He stood, the puzzle only was increased;
The man was a phantasmagoria in
Himself — he was so volatile and thin.

LXXVIII

The moment that you had pronounced him *one*,
Presto! his face changed, and he was another;
And when that change was hardly well put on,
It varied, till I don't think his own mother
(If that he had a mother) would her son
Have known, he shifted so from one to t' other;
Till guessing from a pleasure grew a task,
At this epistolary 'Iron Mask.'

LXXIX

For sometimes he like Cerberus would seem —
'Three gentlemen at once' (as sagely says
Good Mrs. Malaprop); then you might deem
That he was not even *one*; now many rays
Were flashing round him; and now a thick steam
Hid him from sight — like fogs on London days:
Now Burke, now Tooke, he grew to people's fancies,
And certes often like Sir Philip Francis.

LXXX

I ’ve an hypothesis — ’t is quite my own;
I never let it out till now, for fear
Of doing people harm about the throne,
And injuring some minister or peer
On whom the stigma might perhaps be blown:
It is — my gentle public, lend thine ear!
’T is, that what Junius we are wont to call
Was *really*, *truly*, nobody at all.

LXXXI

I don’t see wherefore letters should not be
Written without hands, since we daily view
Them written without heads; and books, we see,
Are fill’d as well without the latter too:
And really till we fix on somebody
For certain sure to claim them as his due,
Their author, like the Niger’s mouth, will bother
The world to say if *there* be mouth or author.

LXXXII

‘And who and what art thou?’ the Archangel said. —
‘For *that* you may consult my title-page,’
Replied this mighty shadow of a shade:
‘If I have kept my secret half an age,
I scarce shall tell it now.’ — ‘Canst thou upbraid,’
Continued Michael, ‘George Rex, or allege
Aught further?’ Junius answer’d, ‘You had better
First ask him for *his* answer to my letter:

LXXXIII

‘My charges upon record will outlast
The brass of both his epitaph and tomb.’ —
‘Repent’st thou not,’ said Michael, ‘of some past
Exaggeration? something which may doom
Thyself if false, as him if true? Thou wast
Too bitter — is it not so? — in thy gloom
Of passion?’ — ‘Passion!’ cried the phantom dim,
‘I loved my country, and I hated him.

LXXXIV

‘What I have written, I have written: let
The rest be on his head or mine!’ So spoke
Old ‘Nominis Umbra;’ and while speaking yet,
Away he melted in celestial smoke.
Then Satan said to Michael, ‘Don’t forget
To call George Washington, and John Horne Tooke,
And Franklin;’ — but at this time there was heard
A cry for room, though not a phantom stirr’d.

LXXXV

At length with jostling, elbowing, and the aid
Of cherubim appointed to that post,
The devil Asmodeus to the circle made
His way, and look’d as if his journey cost
Some trouble. When his burden down he laid,
‘What ’s this?’ cried Michael; ‘why, ’t is not a ghost?’
‘I know it,’ quoth the incubus; ‘but he
Shall be one, if you leave the affair to me.

LXXXVI

‘Confound the renegado! I have sprain’d
My left wing, he ’s so heavy; one would think
Some of his works about his neck were chain’d.
But to the point; while hovering o’er the brink
Of Skiddaw (where as usual it still rain’d),
I saw a taper, far below me, wink,
And stooping, caught this fellow at a libel —
No less on history than the Holy Bible.

LXXXVII

‘The former is the devil’s scripture, and
The latter yours, good Michael; so the affair
Belongs to all of us, you understand.
I snatch’d him up just as you see him there,
And brought him off for sentence out of hand:
I ’ve scarcely been ten minutes in the air —
At least a quarter it can hardly be:
I dare say that his wife is still at tea.’

LXXXVIII

Here Satan said, 'I know this man of old,
And have expected him for some time here;
A sillier fellow you will scarce behold,
Or more conceited in his petty sphere:
But surely it was not worth while to fold
Such trash below your wing, Asmodeus dear:
We had the poor wretch safe (without being bored
With carriage) coming of his own accord.

LXXXIX

'But since he's here, let's see what he has done.'—
'Done!' cried Asmodeus, 'he anticipates
The very business you are now upon,
And scribbles as if head clerk to the Fates.
Who knows to what his ribaldry may run,
When such an ass as this, like Balaam's, prates?'—
'Let's hear,' quoth Michael, 'what he has to say;
You know we're bound to that in every way.'

XC

Now the bard, glad to get an audience, which
By no means often was his case below,
Began to cough, and hawk, and hem, and pitch
His voice into that awful note of woe
To all unhappy hearers within reach
Of poets when the tide of rhyme's in flow;
But stuck fast with his first hexameter,
Not one of all whose gouty feet would stir.

XCI

But ere the spavin'd dactyls could be spurr'd
Into recitative, in great dismay
Both cherubim and seraphim were heard
To murmur loudly through their long array;
And Michael rose ere he could get a word
Of all his founder'd verses under way,
And cried, 'For God's sake, stop, my friend! 't were best—
Non Di, non homines—you know the rest!'

XCII

A general bustle spread throughout the throng,
Which seem'd to hold all verse in detestation;
The angels had of course enough of song
When upon service; and the generation
Of ghosts had heard too much in life, not long
Before, to profit by a new occasion;
The monarch, mute till then, exclaim'd, 'What! what!
Pye come again? No more—no more of that!'

XCIII

The tumult grew; an universal cough
Convulsed the skies, as during a debate,
When Castlereagh has been up long enough
(Before he was first minister of state,
I mean—the *slaves hear now*); some cried 'Off, off!'
As at a farce; till, grown quite desperate,
The bard Saint Peter pray'd to interpose
(Himself an author) only for his prose.

XCIV

The varlet was not an ill-favour'd knave;
A good deal like a vulture in the face,
With a hook nose and a hawk's eye, which gave
A smart and sharper-looking sort of grace
To his whole aspect, which, though rather grave,
Was by no means so ugly as his case;
But that indeed was hopeless as can be,
Quite a poetic felony '*de se*.'

XCV

Then Michael blew his trump, and still'd the noise
With one still greater, as is yet the mode
On earth besides; except some grumbling voice,
Which now and then will make a slight inroad
Upon decorous silence, few will twice
Lift up their lungs when fairly overcrow'd.
And now the bard could plead his own bad cause,
With all the attitudes of self-applause.

XCVI

He said (I only give the heads) — he said,
He meant no harm in scribbling; 't was his way
Upon all topics; 't was, besides, his bread,
Of which he butter'd both sides; 't would delay
Too long the assembly (he was pleased to dread),
And take up rather more time than a day,
To name his works — he would but cite a few —
Wat Tyler — Rhymes on Blenheim — Waterloo.

XCVII

He had written praises of a regicide;
He had written praises of all kings whatever;
He had written for republics far and wide,
And then against them bitterer than ever;
For pantisocracy he once had cried
Aloud, a scheme less moral than 't was clever;
Then grew a hearty anti-jacobin —
Had turn'd his coat — and would have turn'd his skin.

XCVIII

He had sung against all battles, and again
In their high praise and glory; he had call'd
Reviewing 'the ungentle craft,' and then
Become as base a critic as e'er crawl'd —
Fed, paid, and pamper'd by the very men
By whom his muse and morals had been maul'd:
He had written much blank verse, and blanker prose,
And more of both than any body knows.

XCIX

He had written Wesley's life: — here turning round
To Satan, 'Sir, I 'm ready to write yours,
In two octavo volumes, nicely bound,
With notes and preface, all that most allures
The pious purchaser; and there 's no ground
For fear, for I can choose my own reviewers:
So let me have the proper documents,
That I may add you to my other saints.'

C

Satan bow'd, and was silent. 'Well, if you,
With amiable modesty, decline
My offer, what says Michael? There are few
Whose memoirs could be render'd more divine.
Mine is a pen of all work; not so new
As it was once, but I would make you shine
Like your own trumpet. By the way, my own
Has more of brass in it, and is as well blown.

CI

'But talking about trumpets, here 's my Vision!
Now you shall judge, all people; yes, you shall
Judge with my judgment, and by my decision
Be guided who shall enter heaven or fall.
I settle all these things by intuition,
Times present, past, to come, heaven, hell, and all,
Like king Alfonso. When I thus see double,
I save the Deity some worlds of trouble.'

CII

He ceased, and drew forth an MS.; and no
Persuasion on the part of devils, or saints,
Or angels, now could stop the torrent; so
He read the first three lines of the contents;
But at the fourth, the whole spiritual show
Had vanish'd, with variety of scents
Ambrosial and sulphureous, as they sprang,
Like lightning, off from his 'melodious twang.'

CIII

Those grand heroics acted as a spell;
The angels stopp'd their ears and plied their pinions;
The devils ran howling, deafen'd, down to hell;
The ghosts fled, gibbering, for their own dominions
(For 't is not yet decided where they dwell,
And I leave every man to his opinions);
Michael took refuge in his trump — but, lo!
His teeth were set on edge, he could not blow!

CIV

Saint Peter, who has hitherto been known
For an impetuous saint, upraised his keys,
And at the fifth line knock'd the poet down;
Who fell like Phaeton, but more at ease,
Into his lake, for there he did not drown;
A different web being by the Destinies
Woven for the Laureate's final wreath, whene'er
Reform shall happen either here or there.

CV

He first sank to the bottom — like his works,
But soon rose to the surface — like himself;
For all corrupted things are buoy'd like corks,
By their own rottenness, light as an elf,
Or wisp that flits o'er a morass: he lurks,
It may be, still, like dull books on a shelf,
In his own den, to scrawl some 'Life' or 'Vision,'
As Welborn says — 'the devil turn'd precisian.'

CVI

As for the rest, to come to the conclusion
Of this true dream, the telescope is gone
Which kept my optics free from all delusion,
And show'd me what I in my turn have shown;
All I saw farther, in the last confusion,
Was, that King George slipp'd into heaven for one;
And when the tumult dwindled to a calm,
I left him practising the hundredth psalm.

THE AGE OF BRONZE

OR, CARMEN SECULARE ET ANNUS HAUD MIRABILIS

Impar *Congressus* Achilli.

I

The 'good old times' — all times when old are good —
Are gone; the present might be if they would;
Great things have been, and are, and greater still
Want little of mere mortals but their will:
A wider space, a greener field, is given
To those who play their 'tricks before high heaven.'
I know not if the angels weep, but men
Have wept enough — for what? — to weep again!

II

All is exploded — be it good or bad.
Reader! — remember when thou wert a lad,
Then Pitt was all; or, if not all, so much,
His very rival almost deem'd him such.
We, we have seen the intellectual race
Of giants stand, like Titans, face to face —
Athos and Ida, with a dashing sea
Of eloquence between, which flow'd all free,
As the deep billows of the Ægean roar
Betwixt the Hellenic and the Phrygian shore.
But where are they — the rivals! a few feet
Of sullen earth divide each winding sheet.
How peaceful and how powerful is the grave,
Which hushes all! a calm, unstormy wave,
Which oversweeps the world. The theme is old
Of 'dust to dust,' but half its tale untold:
Time tempers not its terrors — still the worm
Winds its cold folds, the tomb preserves its form,
Varied above, but still alike below;
The urn may shine, the ashes will not glow,
Though Cleopatra's mummy cross the sea
O'er which from empire she lured Antony;
Though Alexander's urn a show be grown,
On shores he wept to conquer, though unknown —
How vain, how worse than vain, at length appear
The madman's wish, the Macedonian's tear!
He wept for worlds to conquer — half the earth
Knows not his name, or but his death, and birth,
And desolation; while his native Greece
Hath all of desolation, save its peace.
He 'wept for worlds to conquer!' he who ne'er
Conceived the globe he panted not to spare!
With even the busy Northern Isle unknown,
Which holds his urn and never knew his throne.

III

But where is he, the modern, mightier far,
Who, born no king, made monarchs draw his car;
The new Sesostris, whose unharness'd kings,
Freed from the bit, believe themselves with wings,
And spurn the dust o'er which they crawl'd of late,
Chain'd to the chariot of the chieftain's state?
Yes! where is he, the champion and the child
Of all that 's great or little, wise or wild?
Whose game was empires and whose stakes were thrones?
Whose table earth — whose dice were human bones?
Behold the grand result in yon lone isle,
And, as thy nature urges, weep or smile.
Sigh to behold the eagle's lofty rage
Reduced to nibble at his narrow cage;
Smile to survey the queller of the nations
Now daily squabbling o'er disputed rations;
Weep to perceive him mourning, as he dines,
O'er curtail'd dishes and o'er stinted wines,
O'er petty quarrels upon petty things, —
Is this the man who scourged or feasted kings?
Behold the scales in which his fortune hangs,
A surgeon's statement and an earl's harangues!
A bust delay'd, a book refused, can shake
The sleep of him who kept the world awake.
Is this indeed the tamer of the great,
Now slave of all could tease or irritate —
The paltry gaoler and the prying spy,
The staring stranger with his note-book nigh?
Plunged in a dungeon, he had still been great;
How low, how little was this middle state,
Between a prison and a palace, where
How few could feel for what he had to bear!
Vain his complaint, — my lord presents his bill,
His food and wine were doled out duly still:
Vain was his sickness, never was a clime
So free from homicide — to doubt 's a crime;
And the stiff surgeon, who maintain'd his cause,
Hath lost his place and gain'd the world's applause.
But smile — though all the pangs of brain and heart
Disdain, defy, the tardy aid of art;
Though, save the few fond friends and imaged face
Of that fair boy his sire shall ne'er embrace,
None stand by his low bed — though even the mind
Be wavering, which long awed and awes mankind;
Smile — for the fetter'd eagle breaks his chain,
And higher worlds than this are his again.

IV

How, if that soaring spirit still retain
A conscious twilight of his blazing reign,
How must he smile, on looking down, to see
The little that he was and sought to be!
What though his name a wider empire found
Than his ambition, though with scarce a bound;
Though first in glory, deepest in reverse,
He tasted empire's blessings and its curse;
Though kings, rejoicing in their late escape
From chains, would gladly be *their* tyrant's ape;
How must he smile, and turn to yon lone grave,
The proudest sea-mark that o'ertops the wave!
What though his gaoler, duteous to the last,
Scarce deem'd the coffin's lead could keep him fast,
Refusing one poor line along the lid,
To date the birth and death of all it hid;
That name shall hallow the ignoble shore,
A talisman to all save him who bore.
The fleets that sweep before the eastern blast
Shall hear their sea-boys hail it from the mast;
When Victory's Gallic column shall but rise,
Like Pompey's pillar, in a desert's skies,
The rocky isle that holds or held his dust
Shall crown the Atlantic like the hero's bust,

And mighty nature o'er his obsequies
Do more than niggard envy still denies.
But what are these to him? Can glory's lust
Touch the freed spirit or the fetter'd dust?
Small care hath he of what his tomb consists;
Nought if he sleeps — nor more if he exists:
Alike the better-seeing shade will smile
On the rude cavern of the rocky isle,
As if his ashes found their latest home
In Rome's Pantheon or Gaul's mimic dome.
He wants not this; but France shall feel the want
Of this last consolation, though so scant;
Her honour, fame, and faith demand his bones
To rear above a pyramid of thrones;
Or carried onward in the battle's van,
To form, like Guesclin's dust, her talisman.
But be it as it is — the time may come
His name shall beat the alarm, like Ziska's drum.

V

Oh heaven! of which he was in power a feature;
Oh earth! of which he was a noble creature;
Thou isle! to be remember'd long and well,
That saw'st the unfledged eaglet chip his shell!
Ye Alps, which view'd him in his dawning flights
Hover, the victor of a hundred fights!
Thou Rome, who saw'st thy Cæsar's deeds outdone!
Alas! why pass'd he too the Rubicon —
The Rubicon of man's awaken'd rights,
To herd with vulgar kings and parasites?
Egypt! from whose all dateless tombs arose
Forgotten Pharaohs from their long repose,
And shook within their pyramids to hear
A new Cambyses thundering in their ear;
While the dark shades of forty ages stood
Like startled giants by Nile's famous flood;
Or from the pyramid's tall pinnacle
Beheld the desert peopled, as from hell,
With clashing hosts, who strew'd the barren sand
To re-manure the uncultivated land!
Spain! which, a moment mindless of the Cid,
Beheld his banner flouting thy Madrid!
Austria! which saw thy twice-ta'en capital
Twice spared to be the traitress of his fall!
Ye race of Frederic! — Frederics but in name
And falsehood — heirs to all except his fame;
Who, crush'd at Jena, crouch'd at Berlin, fell
First, and but rose to follow! Ye who dwell
Where Kosciusko dwelt, remembering yet
The unpaid amount of Catherine's bloody debt!
Poland! o'er which the avenging angel past,
But left thee as he found thee, still a waste,
Forgetting all thy still enduring claim,
Thy lotted people and extinguish'd name,
Thy sigh for freedom, thy long flowing tear,
That sound that crashes in the tyrant's ear —
Kosciusko! On — on — on — the thirst of war
Gasps for the gore of serfs and of their czar.
The half barbaric Moscow's minarets
Gleam in the sun, but 't is a sun that sets!
Moscow! thou limit of his long career,
For which rude Charles had wept his frozen tear
To see in vain — *he* saw thee — how? with spire
And palace fuel to one common fire.
To this the soldier lent his kindling match,
To this the peasant gave his cottage thatch,
To this the merchant flung his hoarded store,
The prince his hall — and Moscow was no more!
Sublimest of volcanoes! Etna's flame
Pales before thine, and quenchless Hecla's tame;
Vesuvius shows his blaze, an usual sight
For gazing tourists, from his hackney'd height;
Thou stand'st alone unrivall'd, till the fire
To come, in which all empires shall expire.

Thou other element! as strong and stern,
To teach a lesson conquerors will not learn! —
Whose icy wing flapp'd o'er the faltering foe,
Till fell a hero with each flake of snow;
How did thy numbing beak and silent fang
Pierce, till hosts perish'd with a single pang!
In vain shall Seine look up along his banks
For the gay thousands of his dashing ranks!

In vain shall France recall beneath her vines
Her youth — their blood flows faster than her wines,
Or stagnant in their human ice remains
In frozen mummies on the Polar plains.
In vain will Italy's broad sun awaken
Her offspring chill'd; its beams are now forsaken.
Of all the trophies gather'd from the war,
What shall return ? — the conqueror's broken car !
The conqueror's yet unbroken heart ! Again
The horn of Roland sounds, and not in vain.
Lutzen, where fell the Swede of victory,
Beholds him conquer, but, alas ! not die:
Dresden surveys three despots fly once more
Before their sovereign, — sovereign as before;
But there exhausted Fortune quits the field,
And Leipsic's treason bids the unvanquish'd yield;
The Saxon jackal leaves the lion's side
To turn the bear's and wolf's and fox's guide;
And backward to the den of his despair
The forest monarch shrinks, but finds no lair !

Oh, ye ! and each, and all ! Oh France, who found
Thy long fair fields, plough'd up as hostile ground,
Disputed foot by foot, till treason, still
His only victor, from Montmartre's hill
Look'd down o'er trampled Paris ! and thou Isle,
Which seest Etruria from thy ramparts smile,
Thou momentary shelter of his pride,
Till woo'd by danger, his yet weeping bride !
Oh France, retaken by a single march,
Whose path was through one long triumphal arch !
Oh, bloody and most bootless Waterloo !
Which proves how fools may have their fortune too,
Won half by blunder, half by treachery:
Oh, dull Saint Helen ! with thy gaoler nigh —
Hear ! hear Prometheus from his rock appeal
To earth, air, ocean, all that felt or feel
His power and glory, all who yet shall hear
A name eternal as the rolling year;
He teaches them the lesson taught so long,
So oft, so vainly — learn to do no wrong !
A single step into the right had made
This man the Washington of worlds betray'd:
A single step into the wrong has given
His name a doubt to all the winds of heaven;
The reed of Fortune, and of thrones the rod,
Of Fame the Moloch or the demigod;
His country's Cæsar, Europe's Hannibal,
Without their decent dignity of fall.
Yet Vanity herself had better taught
A surer path even to the fame he sought,
By pointing out on history's fruitless page
Ten thousand conquerors for a single sage.
While Franklin's quiet memory climbs to heaven,
Calming the lightning which he thence hath riven,
Or drawing from the no less kindled earth
Freedom and peace to that which boasts his birth;
While Washington 's a watchword, such as ne'er
Shall sink while there 's an echo left to air:
While even the Spaniard's thirst of gold and war
Forgets Pizarro to shout Bolivar !
Alas ! why must the same Atlantic wave
Which wafted freedom gird a tyrant's grave —
The king of kings, and yet of slaves the slave,
Who bursts the chains of millions to renew
The very fetters which his arm broke through,
And crush'd the rights of Europe and his own,
To flit between a dungeon and a throne ?

VI

But 't will not be — the spark 's awaken'd — lo !
The swarthy Spaniard feels his former glow;
The same high spirit which beat back the Moor
Through eight long ages of alternate gore
Revives — and where ? in that avenging clime
Where Spain was once synonymous with crime,

Where Cortes' and Pizarro's banner flew,
The infant world redeems her name of '*New.*'
'T is the *old* aspiration breathed afresh,
To kindle souls within degraded flesh,
Such as repulsed the Persian from the shore
Where Greece *was* — No! she still is Greece once more.
One common cause makes myriads of one breast,
Slaves of the east, or helots of the west;
On Andes' and on Athos' peaks unfurl'd,
The self-same standard streams o'er either world.
The Athenian wears again Harmodius' sword;
The Chili chief abjures his foreign lord;
The Spartan knows himself once more a Greek,
Young Freedom plumes the crest of each cacique.
Debating despots, hemm'd on either shore,
Shrink vainly from the roused Atlantic's roar;
Through Calpe's strait the rolling tides advance,
Sweep slightly by the half-tamed land of France,
Dash o'er the old Spaniard's cradle, and would fain
Unite Ausonia to the mighty main:
But driven from thence awhile, yet not for aye,
Break o'er th' Ægean, mindful of the day
Of Salamis! — there, there the waves arise,
Not to be lull'd by tyrant victories.
Lone, lost, abandon'd in their utmost need
By Christians, unto whom they gave their creed,
The desolated lands, the ravaged isle,
The foster'd feud encouraged to beguile,
The aid evaded, and the cold delay,
Prolong'd but in the hope to make a prey; —
These, these shall tell the tale, and Greece can show
The false friend worse than the infuriate foe.
But this is well: Greeks only should free Greece,
Not the barbarian, with his mask of peace.
How should the autocrat of bondage be
The king of serfs, and set the nations free?
Better still serve the haughty Mussulman,
Than swell the Cossaque's prowling caravan;
Better still toil for masters, than await,
The slave of slaves, before a Russian gate, —
Numbered by hordes, a human capital,
A live estate, existing but for thrall,
Lotted by thousands, as a meet reward
For the first courtier in the Czar's regard;
While their immediate owner never tastes
His sleep, *sans* dreaming of Siberia's wastes;
Better succumb even to their own despair,
And drive the camel than purvey the bear.

VII

But not alone within the hoariest clime
Where Freedom dates her birth with that of Time,
And not alone where, plunged in night, a crowd
Of Incas darken to a dubious cloud,
The dawn revives: renown'd, romantic Spain
Holds back the invader from her soil again.
Not now the Roman tribe nor Punic horde
Demand her fields as lists to prove the sword;
Not now the Vandal or the Visigoth
Pollute the plains, alike abhorring both;
Nor old Pelayo on his mountain rears
The warlike fathers of a thousand years.
That seed is sown and reap'd, as oft the Moor
Sighs to remember on his dusky shore.
Long in the peasant's song or poet's page
Has dwelt the memory of Abencerrage;
The Zegri, and the captive victors, flung
Back to the barbarous realm from whence they sprung.
But these are gone — their faith, their swords, their sway,
Yet left more anti-christian foes than they;
The bigot monarch and the butcher priest,
The Inquisition, with her burning feast,
The faith's red 'auto,' fed with human fuel,
While sate the catholic Moloch, calmly cruel,
Enjoying, with inexorable eye,
That fiery festival of agony!
The stern or feeble sovereign, one or both
By turns; the haughtiness whose pride was sloth;
The long degenerate noble; the debased
Hidalgo, and the peasant less disgraced,
But more degraded; the unpeopled realm;
The once proud navy which forgot the helm;

The once impervious phalanx disarray'd;
The idle forge that form'd Toledo's blade;
The foreign wealth that flow'd on ev'ry shore,
Save hers who earn'd it with the natives' gore;
The very language which might vie with Rome's,
And once was known to nations like their homes,
Neglected or forgotten: — such was Spain;
But such she is not, nor shall be again.
These worst, these *home* invaders, felt and feel
The new Numantine soul of old Castile.
Up! up again! undaunted Tauridor!
The bull of Phalaris renews his roar;
Mount, chivalrous Hidalgo! not in vain
Revive the cry — 'Iago! and close Spain!'
Yes, close her with your armèd bosoms round,
And form the barrier which Napoleon found, —
The exterminating war, the desert plain,
The streets without a tenant, save the slain;
The wild sierra, with its wilder troop
Of vulture-plumed guerrillas, on the stoop
For their incessant prey; the desperate wall
Of Saragossa, mightiest in her fall;
The man nerved to a spirit, and the maid
Waving her more than Amazonian blade;
The knife of Arragon, Toledo's steel;
The famous lance of chivalrous Castile;
The unerring rifle of the Catalan;
The Andalusian courser in the van;
The torch to make a Moscow of Madrid;
And in each heart the spirit of the Cid: —
Such have been, such shall be, such are. Advance,
And win — not Spain, but thine own freedom, France!

VIII

But lo! a Congress! What! that hallow'd name
Which freed the Atlantic? May we hope the same
For outworn Europe? With the sound arise,
Like Samuel's shade to Saul's monarchic eyes,
The prophets of young Freedom, summon'd far
From climes of Washington and Bolivar;
Henry, the forest-born Demosthenes,
Whose thunder shook the Philip of the seas;
And stoic Franklin's energetic shade,
Robed in the lightnings which his hand allay'd;
And Washington, the tyrant-tamer, wake,
To bid us blush for these old chains, or break.
But *who* compose this senate of the few
That should redeem the many? *Who* renew
This consecrated name, till now assign'd
To councils held to benefit mankind?
Who now assemble at the holy call?
The blest Alliance, which says three are all!
An earthly trinity! which wears the shape
Of heaven's, as man is mimick'd by the ape.
A pious unity! in purpose one —
To melt three fools to a Napoleon.
Why, Egypt's gods were rational to these;
Their dogs and oxen knew their own degrees,
And, quiet in their kennel or their shed,
Cared little, so that they were duly fed;
But these, more hungry, must have something more,
The power to bark and bite, to toss and gore.
Ah! how much happier were good Æsop's frogs
Than we! for ours are animated logs,
With ponderous malice swaying to and fro,
And crushing nations with a stupid blow;
All duly anxious to leave little work
Unto the revolutionary stork.

IX

Thrice blest Verona! since the holy three
With their imperial presence shine on thee;
Honour'd by them, thy treacherous site forgets
The vaunted tomb of 'all the Capulets:'
Thy Scaligers — for what was 'Dog the Great,'
'Can Grande' (which I venture to translate),
To these sublimer pugs? Thy poet too,
Catullus, whose old laurels yield to new;
Thine amphitheatre, where Romans sate;
And Dante's exile shelter'd by thy gate;
Thy good old man, whose world was all within
Thy wall, nor knew the country held him in:

Would that the royal guests it girds about
Were so far like, as never to get out!
Ay, shout! inscribe! rear monuments of shame,
To tell Oppression that the world is tame!
Crowd to the theatre with loyal rage,
The comedy is not upon the stage;
The show is rich in ribandry and stars,
Then gaze upon it through thy dungeon bars;
Clap thy permitted palms, kind Italy,
For thus much still thy fetter'd hands are free!

X

Resplendent sight! Behold the coxcomb Czar,
The autocrat of waltzes and of war!
As eager for a plaudit as a realm,
And just as fit for flirting as the helm;
A Calmuck beauty with a Cossack wit,
And generous spirit, when 't is not frost-bit;
Now half dissolving to a liberal thaw,
But harden'd back whene'er the morning 's raw;
With no objection to true liberty,
Except that it would make the nations free.
How well the imperial dandy prates of peace!
How fain, if Greeks would be his slaves, free Greece!
How nobly gave he back the Poles their Diet,
Then told pugnacious Poland to be quiet!
How kindly would he send the mild Ukraine,
With all her pleasant pulks, to lecture Spain!
How royally show off in proud Madrid
His goodly person, from the South long hid!
A blessing cheaply purchased, the world knows,
By having Muscovites for friends or foes.
Proceed, thou namesake of great Philip's son!
La Harpe, thine Aristotle, beckons on;
And that which Scythia was to him of yore
Find with thy Scythians on Iberia's shore.
Yet think upon, thou somewhat aged youth,
Thy predecessor on the banks of Pruth;
Thou hast to aid thee, should his lot be thine,
Many an old woman, but no Catherine.
Spain, too, hath rocks, and rivers, and defiles —
The bear may rush into the lion's toils.
Fatal to Goths are Xeres' sunny fields;
Think'st thou to thee Napoleon's victor yields?
Better reclaim thy deserts, turn thy swords
To ploughshares, shave and wash thy Bashkir hordes,
Redeem thy realms from slavery and the knout,
Than follow headlong in the fatal route,
To infest the clime whose skies and laws are pure
With thy foul legions. Spain wants no manure:
Her soil is fertile, but she feeds no foe;
Her vultures, too, were gorged not long ago;
And wouldst thou furnish them with fresher prey?
Alas! thou wilt not conquer, but purvey.
I am Diogenes, though Russ and Hun
Stand between mine and many a myriad's sun;
But were I not Diogenes, I 'd wander
Rather a worm than *such* an Alexander!
Be slaves who will, the cynic shall be free;
His tub hath tougher walls than Sinopë:
Still will he hold his lantern up to scan
The face of monarchs for an 'honest man.'

XI

And what doth Gaul, the all-prolific land
Of *ne plus ultra* ultras and their band
Of mercenaries? and her noisy chambers
And tribune, which each orator first clambers
Before he finds a voice, and when 't is found,
Hears 'the lie' echo for his answer round?
Our British Commons sometimes deign to 'hear!'
A Gallic senate hath more tongue than ear;
Even Constant, their sole master of debate,
Must fight next day his speech to vindicate.
But this costs little to true Franks, who had rather
Combat than listen, were it to their father.
What is the simple standing of a shot,
To listening long, and interrupting not?
Though this was not the method of old Rome,
When Tully fulmined o'er each vocal dome,
Demosthenes has sanction'd the transaction,
In saying eloquence meant 'Action, action!'

XII

But where 's the monarch? hath he dined? or yet
Groans beneath indigestion's heavy debt?
Have revolutionary patés risen,
And turn'd the royal entrails to a prison?
Have discontented movements stirr'd the troops?
Or have *no* movements follow'd traitorous soups?
Have Carbonaro cooks not carbonadoed
Each course enough? or doctors dire dissuaded
Repletion? Ah! in thy dejected looks
I read all France's treason in her cooks!
Good classic Louis! is it, canst thou say,
Desirable to be the Désiré?
Why wouldst thou leave calm Hartwell's green abode,
Apician table, and Horatian ode,
To rule a people who will not be ruled,
And love much rather to be scourged than school'd?
Ah! thine was not the temper or the taste
For thrones; the table sees thee better placed;
A mild Epicurean, form'd, at best,
To be a kind host and as good a guest,
To talk of letters, and to know by heart
One *half* the poet's, *all* the gourmand's art;
A scholar always, now and then a wit,
And gentle when digestion may permit;—
But not to govern lands enslaved or free;
The gout was martyrdom enough for thee.

XIII

Shall noble Albion pass without a phrase
From a bold Briton in her wonted praise?
'Arts, arms, and George, and glory, and the isles,
And happy Britain, wealth, and Freedom's smiles;
White cliffs, that held invasion far aloof,
Contented subjects, all alike tax-proof;
Proud Wellington, with eagle beak so curl'd,
That nose, the hook where he suspends the world;
And Waterloo, and trade, and (hush! not yet
A syllable of imposts or of debt);
And ne'er (enough) lamented Castlereagh,
Whose penknife slit a goose-quill t' other day;
And "pilots who have weather'd every storm"
(But, no, not even for rhyme's sake, name Reform)'—
These are the themes thus sung so oft before,
Methinks we need not sing them any more;
Found in so many volumes far and near,
There 's no occasion you should find them here.
Yet something may remain perchance to chime
With reason, and, what 's stranger still, with rhyme.
Even this thy genius, Canning! may permit,
Who, bred a statesman, still wast born a wit,
And never, even in that dull House, couldst tame
To unleaven'd prose thine own poetic flame;
Our last, our best, our only orator,
Even I can praise thee — Tories do no more:
Nay, not so much; — they hate thee, man, because
Thy spirit less upholds them than it awes.
The hounds will gather to their huntsman's hollo,
And where he leads the duteous pack will follow;
But not for love mistake their yelling cry,
Their yelp for game is not an eulogy;
Less faithful far than the four-footed pack,
A dubious scent would lure the bipeds back.
Thy saddle-girths are not yet quite secure,
Nor royal stallion's feet extremely sure;
The unwieldy old white horse is apt at last
To stumble, kick, and now and then stick fast
With his great self and rider in the mud:
But what of that? the animal shows blood.

XIV

Alas, the country! how shall tongue or pen
Bewail her now *un*country gentlemen?
The last to bid the cry of warfare cease,
The first to make a malady of peace.
For what were all these country patriots born?
To hunt, and vote, and raise the price of corn?
But corn, like every mortal thing, must fall,
Kings, conquerors, and markets most of all

And must ye fall with every ear of grain?
Why would you trouble Buonaparte's reign?
He was your great Triptolemus; his vices
Destroy'd but realms, and still maintain'd your prices;
He amplified to every lord's content
The grand agrarian alchymy, high *rent.*
Why did the tyrant stumble on the Tartars,
And lower wheat to such desponding quarters?
Why did you chain him on yon isle so lone?
The man was worth much more upon his throne.
True, blood and treasure boundlessly were spilt,
But what of that? the Gaul may bear the guilt;
But bread was high, the farmer paid his way,
And acres told upon the appointed day.
But where is now the goodly audit ale?
The purse-proud tenant, never known to fail?
The farm which never yet was left on hand?
The marsh reclaim'd to most improving land?
The impatient hope of the expiring lease?
The doubling rental? What an evil 's peace!
In vain the prize excites the ploughman's skill,
In vain the Commons pass their patriot bill;
The *landed interest* (you may understand
The phrase much better leaving out the *land*) —
The land self-interest groans from shore to shore,
For fear that plenty should attain the poor.
Up, up again, ye rents! exalt your notes,
Or else the ministry will lose their votes,
And patriotism, so delicately nice,
Her loaves will lower to the market price;
For ah! 'the loaves and fishes,' once so high,
Are gone — their oven closed, their ocean dry,
And nought remains of all the millions spent,
Excepting to grow moderate and content.
They who are not so, *had* their turn — and turn
About still flows from Fortune's equal urn;
Now let their virtue be its own reward,
And share the blessings which themselves prepared.
See these inglorious Cincinnati swarm,
Farmers of war, dictators of the farm;
Their ploughshare was the sword in hireling hands,
Their fields manured by gore of other lands;
Safe in their barns, these Sabine tillers sent
Their brethren out to battle — why? for rent!
Year after year they voted cent. per cent.,
Blood, sweat, and tear-wrung millions — why? for rent!
They roar'd, they dined, they drank, they swore they meant
To die for England — why then live? — for rent!
The peace has made one general malcontent
Of these high-market patriots; war was rent!
Their love of country, millions all mis-spent,
How reconcile? by reconciling rent!
And will they not repay the treasures lent?
No: down with every thing, and up with rent!
Their good, ill, health, wealth, joy, or discontent,
Being, end, aim, religion — rent, rent, rent!
Thou sold'st thy birthright, Esau! for a mess;
Thou shouldst have gotten more, or eaten less;
Now thou hast swill'd thy pottage, thy demands
Are idle; Israel says the bargain stands.
Such, landlords! was your appetite for war,
And, gorged with blood, you grumble at a scar!
What! would they spread their earthquake even o'er cash?
And when land crumbles, bid firm paper crash?
So rent may rise, bid bank and nation fall,
And found on 'Change a *Fundling* Hospital?
Lo! Mother Church, while all religion writhes,
Like Niobe, weeps o'er her offspring, Tithes;
The prelates go to — where the saints have gone,
And proud pluralities subside to one;

Church, state, and faction wrestle in the dark,
Toss'd by the deluge in their common ark.
Shorn of her bishops, banks, and dividends,
Another Babel soars — but Britain ends.
And why? to pamper the self-seeking wants,
And prop the hill of these agrarian ants.
'Go to these ants, thou sluggard, and be wise;'
Admire their patience through each sacrifice,
Till taught to feel the lesson of their pride,
The price of taxes and of homicide;
Admire their justice, which would fain deny
The debt of nations: — pray *who made it high?*

XV

Or turn to sail between those shifting rocks,
The new Symplegades — the crushing Stocks,
Where Midas might again his wish behold
In real paper or imagined gold.
That magic palace of Alcina shows
More wealth than Britain ever had to lose,
Were all her atoms of unleaven'd ore,
And all her pebbles from Pactolus' shore.
There Fortune plays, while Rumour holds the stake,
And the world trembles to bid brokers break.
How rich is Britain! not indeed in mines,
Or peace or plenty, corn or oil, or wines;
No land of Canaan, full of milk and honey,
Nor (save in paper shekels) ready money:
But let us not to own the truth refuse,
Was ever Christian land so rich in Jews?
Those parted with their teeth to good King John,
And now, ye kings! they kindly draw your own;
All states, all things, all sovereigns they control,
And waft a loan 'from Indus to the pole.'
The banker — broker — baron — brethren, speed
To aid these bankrupt tyrants in their need.
Nor these alone; Columbia feels no less
Fresh speculations follow each success;
And philanthropic Israel deigns to drain
Her mild per-centage from exhausted Spain.
Not without Abraham's seed can Russia march;
'T is gold, not steel, that rears the conqueror's arch.
Two Jews, a chosen people, can command
In every realm their scripture-promised land:
Two Jews keep down the Romans, and uphold
The accursed Hun, more brutal than of old:
Two Jews — but not Samaritans — direct
The world, with all the spirit of their sect.
What is the happiness of earth to them?
A congress forms their 'New Jerusalem,'
Where baronies and orders both invite —
Oh, holy Abraham! dost thou see the sight?
Thy followers mingling with these royal swine,
Who spit not 'on their Jewish gaberdine,'
But honour them as portion of the show
(Where now, oh pope! is thy forsaken toe?
Could it not favour Judah with some kicks?
Or has it ceased to 'kick against the pricks?') —
On Shylock's shore behold them stand afresh,
To cut from nations' hearts their 'pound of flesh.'

XVI

Strange sight, this Congress! destined to unite
All that 's incongruous, all that 's opposite.
I speak not of the Sovereigns — they 're alike,
A common coin as ever mint could strike:
But those who sway the puppets, pull the strings,
Have more of motley than their heavy kings.
Jews, authors, generals, charlatans, combine,
While Europe wonders at the vast design.
There Metternich, power's foremost parasite,
Cajoles; there Wellington forgets to fight.
There Chateaubriand forms new books of martyrs;
And subtle Greeks intrigue for stupid Tartars;
There Montmorenci, the sworn foe to charters.

Turns a diplomatist of great éclat,
To furnish articles for the *Débats;*
Of war so certain — yet not quite so sure
As his dismissal in the *Moniteur.* 720
Alas! how could his cabinet thus err?
Can peace be worth an ultra-minister?
He falls indeed, perhaps to rise again,
'Almost as quickly as he conquer'd Spain.'

XVII

Enough of this — a sight more mournful woos
The averted eye of the reluctant muse.
The imperial daughter, the imperial bride,
The imperial victim — sacrifice to pride;
The mother of the hero's hope, the boy,
The young Astyanax of modern Troy; 730
The still pale shadow of the loftiest queen
That earth has yet to see, or e'er hath seen;
She flits amidst the phantoms of the hour,
The theme of pity, and the wreck of power.
Oh, cruel mockery! Could not Austria spare
A daughter? What did France's widow there?
Her fitter place was by St. Helen's wave,
Her only throne is in Napoleon's grave.
But, no, — she still must hold a petty reign,
Flank'd by her formidable chamberlain; 740
The martial Argus, whose not hundred eyes
Must watch her through these paltry pageantries.
What though she share no more, and shared in vain,
A sway surpassing that of Charlemagne,
Which swept from Moscow to the southern seas!
Yet still she rules the pastoral realm of cheese,
Where Parma views the traveller resort
To note the trappings of her mimic court.
But she appears! Verona sees her shorn
Of all her beams — while nations gaze and mourn — 750
Ere yet her husband's ashes have had time
To chill in their inhospitable clime
(If e'er those awful ashes can grow cold; —
But no, — their embers soon will burst the mould);
She comes! — the Andromache (but not Racine's,
Nor Homer's), — Lo! on Pyrrhus' arm she leans!
Yes! the right arm, yet red from Waterloo,
Which cut her lord's half-shatter'd sceptre through,
Is offer'd and accepted! Could a slave
Do more? or less? — and *he* in his new grave! 760
Her eye, her cheek, betray no inward strife,
And the *ex*-empress grows as *ex* a wife!
So much for human ties in royal breasts!
Why spare men's feelings, when their own are jests?

XVIII

But, tired of foreign follies, I turn home,
And sketch the group — the picture 's yet to come.
My muse 'gan weep, but, ere a tear was spilt,
She caught Sir William Curtis in a kilt!
While throng'd the chiefs of every Highland clan
To hail their brother, Vich Ian Alderman!
Guildhall grows Gael, and echoes with Erse roar, 771
While all the Common Council cry 'Claymore!'
To see proud Albyn's tartans as a belt
Gird the gross sirloin of a city Celt,
She burst into a laughter so extreme,
That I awoke — and lo! it was *no* dream!

Here, reader, will we pause: — if there 's no harm in
This first, you 'll have, perhaps, a second 'Carmen.'

TALES, CHIEFLY ORIENTAL

[These Tales, which spring from the same inspiration as the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, have, perhaps, suffered more than any other part of Byron's work in the minds of posterity. We detect much that is false and melodramatic in their rhetoric, we are too apt to be blind to the tremendous flow of life, the superb egotism, that took England and Europe by storm in those early expansive days and gave to these poems a popularity almost unparalleled. They represent the revolutionary side of Byron's character, — the insolent disregard of custom, the longing for strange adventure, the passion for vivid color, the easy sentimentality, — just as the Satires represent the classical strain of wit in his mind; and only when these two tendencies flow together, as they do in *Don Juan*, shall we have the Byron who has nothing to dread from the tooth of time. The Tales, as was said, in their first origin belong with the earlier cantos of *Childe Harold*, and show the influence of the author's Oriental travels. The first of them, *The Giaour*, has even a certain amount of vaguely defined foundation in facts. In a letter to Thomas Moore, dated September 1, 1813, Byron alludes to the event, which had begun to be too freely talked about, and admits having saved a Turkish girl in the Orient who was to be sewed in a sack and thrown into the sea in accordance with Mohammedan law. Later Hobhouse declared, in the *Westminster Review*, January, 1825, that the girl had not been an object of Byron's attachment but of his Turkish servant's. Like others of Byron's works *The Giaour* was practically remade during its passage through the press. The first draft of the poem, written in May of 1813, consisted of only 407 lines; by November of the same year, when the seventh and definitive edition was issued, it had expanded to 1334 lines. Meanwhile early in this same November, before *The Giaour* was well off his hands, he wrote at fever heat (in four nights, or, according to another account, a week) and published immediately *The Bride of Abydos*. He had found his vein and his public, and was thrifty in making the best of both. It may be gathered from letters of the period that the more romantic spur to his Muse came from a passion for the wife of his friend James Wedderburn Webster, at whose house he was staying at the time. During the latter half of the following month (December, 1813) the third of the Tales, *The Corsair*, was written, and served as a relief to the emotions of the poet who had fled from the same ill-starred passion. How much the poem reflects of Byron's own experience in the East, cannot be known; probably very little. However, in his *Journal*, under date of March 10, 1814, he hints darkly at strange adventures which not even Hobhouse knew about, etc. *Lara*, which may be regarded as a sequel to *The Corsair* and which reintroduces Gulnare as the Page and Conrad as Lara, was finished by June 14, 1814, and was published in August, bound up with Rogers's *Jacqueline*. The two poems, however, were soon 'divorced,' and four editions of *Lara* alone appeared before the end of 1814. Some time during the next year, probably in the early months, *The Siege of Corinth* was composed, and with it one observes a certain change in tone as if the poet were getting a little further away from himself. On January 2d of this year he had married; the experience of life was to crowd upon him rapidly. *Parasina*, a poem exquisitely graceful in parts, was written during the same year. Lady Byron wrote out the copy of the two poems which were sent to the publisher, and which appeared together February 7, 1816; they were little noticed by the press, then savagely engaged with the divorce proceedings that drove Byron from England in the following April. With these two poems, then, the strictly Oriental Tales come to an end, the melodramatic masquerade passes out of the poet's life and the Tales which succeed are instinct with the larger spirit of the later cantos of *Childe Harold* and the Dramas. The next Tale, *The Prisoner of Chillon*, was written at Ouchy, on the border of Lake Leman, where also the third canto of *Childe Harold* was composed. The room in the hotel is still (or, at least, was a few years ago) marked by an inscription attesting the fact that here during a stay of two days in June of 1816 Byron wrote his noble lines. The character of Bonnivard, whose calamities stirred the poet ever ready with a lyric cry for freedom, is disputed by historians according as they incline to Protestant or Catholic views of the struggles of the early sixteenth century; he was unquestionably a fit theme for the declamatory genius of the early nineteenth. From Swiss history Byron turned for his next Tale to Russian legend. *Mazeppa*, the swiftness of whose movement is a literary *tour de force*, was published June 28, 1819. Between it and the last of the Tales came all the Dramas except *Manfred*. The composition of *The Island* fell in the first two months of 1823; the poem was published, not by Murray but by John Hunt, June 26, 1823. It is synchronous therefore with *The Age of Bronze*, and shows a marked similarity with that poem in the use of the heroic couplet. It is synchronous also with the later cantos of *Don Juan*, although the tone of the two poems (the cynical spirit of *Don Juan* had by this time pretty well stifled the romance) would not seem to show a common source. In less than a month after the publication of *The Island*, Byron had sailed for Greece.]

THE GIAOUR

A FRAGMENT OF A TURKISH TALE

> One fatal remembrance — one sorrow that throws
> Its bleak shade alike o'er our joys and our woes —
> To which Life nothing darker nor brighter can bring,
> For which joy hath no balm — and affliction no sting.'
> MOORE.

TO

SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.

AS A SLIGHT BUT MOST SINCERE TOKEN
OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS GENIUS,
RESPECT FOR HIS CHARACTER,
AND GRATITUDE FOR HIS FRIENDSHIP,

THIS PRODUCTION IS INSCRIBED

BY HIS OBLIGED
AND AFFECTIONATE SERVANT,
BYRON.

LONDON, *May*, 1813.

ADVERTISEMENT

The tale which these disjointed fragments present, is founded upon circumstances now less common in the East than formerly; either because the ladies are more circumspect than in the 'olden time,' or because the Christians have better fortune, or less enterprise. The story, when entire, contained the adventures of a female slave, who was thrown, in the Mussulman manner, into the sea, for infidelity, and avenged by a young Venetian, her lover, at the time the Seven Islands were possessed by the Republic of Venice, and soon after the Arnauts were beaten back from the Morea, which they had ravaged for some time subsequent to the Russian invasion. The desertion of the Mainotes, on being refused the plunder of Misitra, led to the abandonment of that enterprise, and to the desolation of the Morea, during which the cruelty exercised on all sides was unparalleled even in the annals of the faithful.

No breath of air to break the wave
That rolls below the Athenian's grave,
That tomb which, gleaming o'er the cliff,
First greets the homeward-veering skiff,
High o'er the land he saved in vain:
When shall such hero live again?

. . . .

Fair clime! where every season smiles
Benignant o'er those blessed isles,
Which, seen from far Colonna's height,
Make glad the heart that hails the sight,
And lend to loneliness delight.
There, mildly dimpling, Ocean's cheek
Reflects the tints of many a peak
Caught by the laughing tides that lave
These Edens of the eastern wave.
And if at times a transient breeze
Break the blue crystal of the seas,
Or sweep one blossom from the trees,
How welcome is each gentle air
That wakes and wafts the odours there!
For there — the Rose o'er crag or vale,
Sultana of the Nightingale,
  The maid for whom his melody,
  His thousand songs are heard on high,
Blooms blushing to her lover's tale.
His queen, the garden queen, his Rose,
Unbent by winds, unchill'd by snows,
Far from the winters of the west,
By every breeze and season blest,
Returns the sweets by nature given
In softest incense back to heaven;
And grateful yields that smiling sky
Her fairest hue and fragrant sigh.
And many a summer flower is there,
And many a shade that love might share,
And many a grotto, meant for rest,
That holds the pirate for a guest;
Whose bark in sheltering cove below
Lurks for the passing peaceful prow,
Till the gay mariner's guitar
Is heard, and seen the evening star.
Then stealing with the muffled oar,
Far shaded by the rocky shore,
Rush the night-prowlers on the prey,
And turn to groans his roundelay.
Strange — that where Nature loved to trace,
As if for Gods, a dwelling-place,
And every charm and grace hath mix'd
Within the paradise she fix'd,
There man, enamour'd of distress,
Should mar it into wilderness,
And trample, brute-like, o'er each flower
That tasks not one laborious hour;
Nor claims the culture of his hand
To bloom along the fairy land,
But springs as to preclude his care,
And sweetly woos him — but to spare!
Strange — that where all is peace beside,
There passion riots in her pride,
And lust and rapine wildly reign
To darken o'er the fair domain.

It is as though the fiends prevail'd
Against the seraphs they assail'd,
And, fix'd on heavenly thrones, should dwell
The freed inheritors of hell;
So soft the scene, so form'd for joy,
So curst the tyrants that destroy!

He who hath bent him o'er the dead
Ere the first day of death is fled,
The first dark day of nothingness,
The last of danger and distress
(Before Decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers),
And mark'd the mild angelic air,
The rapture of repose that 's there,
The fix'd yet tender traits that streak
The languor of the placid cheek,
And — but for that sad shrouded eye,
That fires not, wins not, weeps not, now,
And but for that chill, changeless brow,
Where cold Obstruction's apathy
Appals the gazing mourner's heart,
As if to him it could impart
The doom he dreads, yet dwells upon;
Yes, but for these and these alone,
Some moments, ay, one treacherous hour
He still might doubt the tyrant's power;
So fair, so calm, so softly seal'd,
The first, last look by death reveal'd!
Such is the aspect of this shore;
'T is Greece, but living Greece no more!
So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
We start, for soul is wanting there.
Hers is the loveliness in death,
That parts not quite with parting breath;
But beauty with that fearful bloom,
That hue which haunts it to the tomb,
Expression's last receding ray,
A gilded halo hovering round decay,
The farewell beam of Feeling past away!
Spark of that flame, perchance of heavenly birth,
Which gleams, but warms no more its cherish'd earth!

Clime of the unforgotten brave!
Whose land from plain to mountain-cave
Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave!
Shrine of the mighty! can it be,
That this is all remains of thee?
Approach, thou craven crouching slave:
Say, is not this Thermopylæ?
These waters blue that round you lave,
Oh, servile offspring of the free —
Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?
The gulf, the rock of Salamis!
These scenes, their story not unknown,
Arise and make again your own;
Snatch from the ashes of your sires
The embers of their former fires;
And he who in the strife expires
Will add to theirs a name of fear
That Tyranny shall quake to hear,
And leave his sons a hope, a fame,
They too will rather die than shame:
For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeath'd by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft is ever won.
Bear witness, Greece, thy living page,
Attest it many a deathless age!
While kings, in dusty darkness hid,
Have left a nameless pyramid,
Thy heroes, though the general doom
Hath swept the column from their tomb,
A mightier monument command,
The mountains of their native land!
There points thy Muse to stranger's eye
The graves of those that cannot die!
'T were long to tell and sad to trace
Each step from splendour to disgrace;
Enough — no foreign foe could quell
Thy soul, till from itself it fell;
Yes! Self-abasement paved the way
To villain-bonds and despot sway.

What can he tell who treads thy shore?
No legend of thine olden time,
No theme on which the muse might soar
High as thine own in days of yore,
When man was worthy of thy clime.
The hearts within thy valleys bred,
The fiery souls that might have led
Thy sons to deeds sublime,
Now crawl from cradle to the grave,
Slaves — nay, the bondsmen of a slave,
And callous, save to crime;
Stain'd with each evil that pollutes
Mankind, where least above the brutes;
Without even savage virtue blest,
Without one free or valiant breast,
Still to the neighbouring ports they waft
Proverbial wiles and ancient craft;
In this the subtle Greek is found,
For this, and this alone, renown'd.
In vain might Liberty invoke
The spirit to its bondage broke,
Or raise the neck that courts the yoke:
No more her sorrows I bewail,
Yet this will be a mournful tale,

And they who listen may believe,
Who heard it first had cause to grieve.

. . . .

Far, dark, along the blue sea glancing,
The shadows of the rocks advancing
Start on the fisher's eye like boat
Of island-pirate or Mainote;
And fearful for his light caïque,
He shuns the near but doubtful creek:
Though worn and weary with his toil,
And cumber'd with his scaly spoil,
Slowly, yet strongly, plies the oar,
Till Port Leone's safer shore
Receives him by the lovely light
That best becomes an Eastern night.

. . . .

Who thundering comes on blackest steed,
With slacken'd bit and hoof of speed?
Beneath the clattering iron's sound
The cavern'd echoes wake around
In lash for lash, and bound for bound;
The foam that streaks the courser's side
Seems gather'd from the ocean-tide.
Though weary waves are sunk to rest,
There 's none within his rider's breast;
And though to-morrow's tempest lower,
'T is calmer than thy heart, young Giaour!
I know thee not, I loathe thy race,
But in thy lineaments I trace
What time shall strengthen, not efface:
Though young and pale, that sallow front
Is scathed by fiery passion's brunt;
Though bent on earth thine evil eye,
As meteor-like thou glidest by,
Right well I view and deem thee one
Whom Othman's sons should slay or shun.

On — on he hasten'd, and he drew
My gaze of wonder as he flew:
Though like a demon of the night
He pass'd, and vanish'd from my sight,
His aspect and his air impress'd
A troubled memory on my breast,
And long upon my startled ear
Rung his dark courser's hoofs of fear.
He spurs his steed; he nears the steep,
That, jutting, shadows o'er the deep;
He winds around; he hurries by;
The rock relieves him from mine eye;
For well I ween unwelcome he
Whose glance is fix'd on those that flee;
And not a star but shines too bright
On him who takes such timeless flight.
He wound along; but ere he pass'd
One glance he snatch'd, as if his last,
A moment check'd his wheeling steed,
A moment breathed him from his speed,
A moment on his stirrup stood —
Why looks he o'er the olive wood?
The crescent glimmers on the hill,
The Mosque's high lamps are quivering still:
Though too remote for sound to wake
In echoes of the far tophaike,
The flashes of each joyous peal
Are seen to prove the Moslem's zeal,
To-night, set Rhamazani's sun;
To-night, the Bairam feast 's begun;
To-night — but who and what art thou
Of foreign garb and fearful brow?
And what are these to thine or thee,
That thou should'st either pause or flee?

He stood — some dread was on his face;
Soon Hatred settled in its place:
It rose not with the reddening flush
Of transient Anger's hasty blush,
But pale as marble o'er the tomb,
Whose ghostly whiteness aids its gloom.
His brow was bent, his eye was glazed;
He raised his arm, and fiercely raised,
And sternly shook his hand on high,
As doubting to return or fly:
Impatient of his flight delay'd,
Here loud his raven charger neigh'd —
Down glanced that hand, and grasp'd his blade;
That sound had burst his waking dream,
As Slumber starts at owlet's scream.
The spur hath lanced his courser's sides;
Away, away, for life he rides:
Swift as the hurl'd on high jerreed
Springs to the touch his startled steed;
The rock is doubled, and the shore
Shakes with the clattering tramp no more;
The crag is won, no more is seen
His Christian crest and haughty mien.
'T was but an instant he restrain'd
That fiery barb so sternly rein'd;
'T was but a moment that he stood,
Then sped as if by death pursued:
But in that instant o'er his soul
Winters of Memory seem'd to roll,
And gather in that drop of time
A life of pain, an age of crime.
O'er him who loves, or hates, or fears,
Such moment pours the grief of years:
What felt *he* then, at once opprest
By all that most distracts the breast?

That pause, which ponder'd o'er his fate,
Oh, who its dreary length shall date !
Though in Time's record nearly nought,
It was Eternity to Thought!
For infinite as boundless space
The thought that Conscience must embrace,
Which in itself can comprehend
Woe without name, or hope, or end.

The hour is past, the Giaour is gone;
And did he fly or fall alone ?
Woe to that hour he came or went !
The curse for Hassan's sin was sent
To turn a palace to a tomb;
He came, he went, like the Simoom,
That harbinger of fate and gloom,
Beneath whose widely-wasting breath
The very cypress droops to death —
Dark tree, still sad when others' grief is fled,
The only constant mourner o'er the dead !

The steed is vanish'd from the stall;
No serf is seen in Hassan's hall;
The lonely Spider's thin gray pall
Waves slowly widening o'er the wall;
The Bat builds in his haram bower;
And in the fortress of his power
The Owl usurps the beacon-tower;
The wild-dog howls o'er the fountain's brim,
With baffled thirst and famine, grim;
For the stream has shrunk from its marble bed,
Where the weeds and the desolate dust are spread.
'T was sweet of yore to see it play
And chase the sultriness of day,
As springing high the silver dew
In whirls fantastically flew,
And flung luxurious coolness round
The air, and verdure o'er the ground.
'T was sweet, when cloudless stars were bright,
To view the wave of watery light,
And hear its melody by night.
And oft had Hassan's Childhood play'd
Around the verge of that cascade;
And oft upon his mother's breast
That sound had harmonized his rest;
And oft had Hassan's Youth along
Its bank been soothed by Beauty's song;
And softer seem'd each melting tone
Of Music mingled with its own.
But ne'er shall Hassan's Age repose
Along the brink at Twilight's close:
The stream that fill'd that font is fled —
The blood that warm'd his heart is shed !
And here no more shall human voice
Be heard to rage, regret, rejoice.
The last sad note that swell'd the gale
Was woman's wildest funeral wail:
That quench'd in silence, all is still,
But the lattice that flaps when the wind is shrill:
Though raves the gust, and floods the rain,
No hand shall close its clasp again.
On desert sands 't were joy to scan
The rudest steps of fellow-man,
So here the very voice of Grief
Might wake an Echo like relief —
At least 't would say, 'All are not gone;
There lingers Life, though but in one.'
For many a gilded chamber 's there,
Which Solitude might well forbear;
Within that dome as yet Decay
Hath slowly work'd her cankering way:
But gloom is gather'd o'er the gate,
Nor there the Fakir's self will wait;
Nor there will wandering Dervise stay,
For bounty cheers not his delay;
Nor there will weary stranger halt
To bless the sacred 'bread and salt.'
Alike must Wealth and Poverty
Pass heedless and unheeded by,
For Courtesy and Pity died
With Hassan on the mountain side.
His roof, that refuge unto men,
Is Desolation's hungry den.
The guest flies the hall, and the vassal from labour,
Since his turban was cleft by the infidel's sabre !

. . . .

I hear the sound of coming feet,
But not a voice mine ear to greet;
More near — each turban I can scan,
And silver-sheathèd ataghan;
The foremost of the band is seen
An Emir by his garb of green:
'Ho ! who art thou ?' — 'This low salam
Replies of Moslem faith I am.' —
'The burthen ye so gently bear
Seems one that claims your utmost care,
And, doubtless, holds some precious freight,
My humble bark would gladly wait.'

'Thou speakest sooth: thy skiff unmoor,
And waft us from the silent shore;
Nay, leave the sail still furl'd, and ply
The nearest oar that 's scatter'd by,
And midway to those rocks where sleep
The channell'd waters dark and deep.
Rest from your task — so — bravely done,
Our course has been right swiftly run;
Yet 't is the longest voyage, I trow,
That one of'— . . . .

. . . .

Sullen it plunged, and slowly sank,
The calm wave rippled to the bank;
I watch'd it as it sank, methought
Some motion from the current caught
Bestirr'd it more, — 't was but the beam
That checker'd o'er the living stream.
I gazed, till vanishing from view,
Like lessening pebble it withdrew;
Still less and less, a speck of white
That gemm'd the tide, then mock'd the sight;
And all its hidden secrets sleep,
Known but to Genii of the deep,
Which, trembling in their coral caves,
They dare not whisper to the waves.

. . . .

As rising on its purple wing
The insect-queen of eastern spring
O'er emerald meadows of Kashmeer
Invites the young pursuer near,
And leads him on from flower to flower
A weary chase and wasted hour,
Then leaves him, as it soars on high,
With panting heart and tearful eye:
So Beauty lures the full-grown child,
With hue as bright, and wing as wild;
A chase of idle hopes and fears,
Begun in folly, closed in tears.
If won, to equal ills betray'd,
Woe waits the insect and the maid;
A life of pain, the loss of peace,
From infant's play, and man's caprice:
The lovely toy so fiercely sought
Hath lost its charm by being caught,
For every touch that woo'd its stay
Hath brush'd its brightest hues away,
Till charm, and hue, and beauty gone,
'T is left to fly or fall alone.
With wounded wing, or bleeding breast,
Ah! where shall either victim rest?
Can this with faded pinion soar
From rose to tulip as before?
Or Beauty, blighted in an hour,
Find joy within her broken bower?
No: gayer insects fluttering by
Ne'er droop the wing o'er those that die,
And lovelier things have mercy shown
To every failing but their own,
And every woe a tear can claim
Except an erring sister's shame.

. . . .

The Mind, that broods o'er guilty woes,
Is like the Scorpion girt by fire:
In circle narrowing as its glows
The flames around their captive close,
Till inly search'd by thousand throes,
And maddening in her ire,
One sad and sole relief she knows;
The sting she nourish'd for her foes,
Whose venom never yet was vain,
Gives but one pang, and cures all pain,
And darts into her desperate brain; —
So do the dark in soul expire,
Or live like Scorpion girt by fire;
So writhes the mind Remorse hath riven,
Unfit for earth, undoom'd for heaven,
Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around it flame, within it death!

. . . .

Black Hassan from the Haram flies,
Nor bends on woman's form his eyes;
The unwonted chase each hour employs,
Yet shares he not the hunter's joys.
Not thus was Hassan wont to fly
When Leila dwelt in his Serai.
Doth Leila there no longer dwell?
That tale can only Hassan tell:
Strange rumours in our city say
Upon that eve she fled away
When Rhamazan's last sun was set,
And flashing from each minaret
Millions of lamps proclaim'd the feast
Of Bairam through the boundless East.
'T was then she went as to the bath,
Which Hassan vainly search'd in wrath;
For she was flown her master's rage
In likeness of a Georgian page,
And far beyond the Moslem's power
Had wrong'd him with the faithless Giaour.
Somewhat of this had Hassan deem'd;
But still so fond, so fair she seem'd,
Too well he trusted to the slave
Whose treachery deserved a grave:
And on that eve had gone to mosque,
And thence to feast in his kiosk.

Such is the tale his Nubians tell,
Who did not watch their charge too well;
But others say, that on that night,
By pale Phingari's trembling light,
The Giaour upon his jet-black steed
Was seen, but seen alone to speed
With bloody spur along the shore,
Nor maid nor page behind him bore.

. . . .

Her eye's dark charm 't were vain to tell,
But gaze on that of the Gazelle,
It will assist thy fancy well;
As large, as languishingly dark,
But Soul beam'd forth in every spark
That darted from beneath the lid,
Bright as the jewel of Giamschid.
Yea, Soul, and should our prophet say
That form was nought but breathing clay,
By Alla! I would answer nay;
Though on Al-Sirat's arch I stood,
Which totters o'er the fiery flood,
With Paradise within my view,
And all his Houris beckoning through.
Oh! who young Leila's glance could read
And keep that portion of his creed,
Which saith that woman is but dust,
A soulless toy for tyrant's lust?
On her might Muftis gaze, and own
That through her eye the Immortal shone;
On her fair cheek's unfading hue
The young pomegranate's blossoms strew
Their bloom in blushes ever new;
Her hair in hyacinthine flow,
When left to roll its folds below,
As midst her handmaids in the hall
She stood superior to them all,
Hath swept the marble where her feet
Gleam'd whiter than the mountain sleet,
Ere from the cloud that gave it birth
It fell, and caught one stain of earth.
The cygnet nobly walks the water;
So moved on earth Circassia's daughter,
The loveliest bird of Franguestan!
As rears her crest the ruffled Swan,
And spurns the wave with wings of pride,
When pass the steps of stranger man
Along the banks that bound her tide;
Thus rose fair Leila's whiter neck: —
Thus arm'd with beauty would she check
Intrusion's glance, till Folly's gaze
Shrunk from the charms it meant to praise.
Thus high and graceful was her gait;
Her heart as tender to her mate;
Her mate — stern Hassan, who was he?
Alas! that name was not for thee!

. . . .

Stern Hassan hath a journey ta'en
With twenty vassals in his train,
Each arm'd, as best becomes a man,
With arquebuss and ataghan;
The chief before, as deck'd for war,
Bears in his belt the scimitar
Stain'd with the best of Arnaut blood,
When in the pass the rebels stood,
And few return'd to tell the tale
Of what befell in Parne's vale.
The pistols which his girdle bore
Were those that once a pasha wore,
Which still, though gemm'd and boss'd with gold,
Even robbers tremble to behold.
'T is said he goes to woo a bride
More true than her who left his side;
The faithless slave that broke her bower,
And, worse than faithless, for a Giaour!

. . . .

The sun's last rays are on the hill,
And sparkle in the fountain rill,
Whose welcome waters, cool and clear,
Draw blessings from the mountaineer.
Here may the loitering merchant Greek
Find that repose 't were vain to seek
In cities lodged too near his lord,
And trembling for his secret hoard —
Here may he rest where none can see,
In crowds a slave, in deserts free;
And with forbidden wine may stain
The bowl a Moslem must not drain.

. . . .

The foremost Tartar 's in the gap,
Conspicuous by his yellow cap;
The rest in lengthening line the while
Wind slowly through the long defile.
Above, the mountain rears a peak,
Where vultures whet the thirsty beak,
And theirs may be a feast to-night
Shall tempt them down ere morrow's light;
Beneath, a river's wintry stream
Has shrunk before the summer beam,
And left a channel bleak and bare,
Save shrubs that spring to perish there.
Each side the midway path there lay
Small broken crags of granite gray,
By time, or mountain lightning, riven
From summits clad in mists of heaven;

For where is he that hath beheld
The peak of Liakura unveil'd?

. . . .

They reach the grove of pine at last;
'Bismillah! now the peril 's past;
For yonder view the opening plain,
And there we 'll prick our steeds amain:'
The Chiaus spake, and as he said,
A bullet whistled o'er his head;
The foremost Tartar bites the ground!
Scarce had they time to check the rein,
Swift from their steeds the riders bound;
But three shall never mount again:
Unseen the foes that gave the wound,
The dying ask revenge in vain.
With steel unsheathed, and carbine bent,
Some o'er their courser's harness leant,
Half shelter'd by the steed;
Some fly behind the nearest rock,
And there await the coming shock,
Nor tamely stand to bleed
Beneath the shaft of foes unseen,
Who dare not quit their craggy screen.
Stern Hassan only from his horse
Disdains to light, and keeps his course,
Till fiery flashes in the van
Proclaim too sure the robber-clan
Have well secured the only way
Could now avail the promised prey.
Then curl'd his very beard with ire,
And glared his eye with fiercer fire:
'Though far and near the bullets hiss,
I 've 'scaped a bloodier hour than this.'
And now the foe their covert quit,
And call his vassals to submit;
But Hassan's frown and furious word
Are dreaded more than hostile sword,
Nor of his little band a man
Resign'd carbine or ataghan,
Nor raised the craven cry, Amaun!
In fuller sight, more near and near,
The lately ambush'd foes appear,
And, issuing from the grove, advance
Some who on battle-charger prance.
Who leads them on with foreign brand
Far flashing in his red right hand?
''T is he! 't is he! I know him now;
I know him by his pallid brow;
I know him by the evil eye
That aids his envious treachery,
I know him by his jet-black barb;
Though now array'd in Arnaut garb,
Apostate from his own vile faith,
It shall not save him from the death:
'T is he! well met in any hour,
Lost Leila's love, accursèd Giaour!'

As rolls the river into ocean,
In sable torrent wildly streaming;
As the sea-tide's opposing motion,
In azure column proudly gleaming,
Beats back the current many a rood,
In curling foam and mingling flood,
While eddying whirl and breaking wave,
Roused by the blast of winter, rave;
Through sparkling spray, in thundering clash,
The lightnings of the waters flash
In awful whiteness o'er the shore,
That shines and shakes beneath the roar;
Thus — as the stream and ocean greet,
With waves that madden as they meet —
Thus join the bands, whom mutual wrong,
And fate, and fury, drive along.
The bickering sabres' shivering jar;
And pealing wide or ringing near
Its echoes on the throbbing ear,
The deathshot hissing from afar;
The shock, the shout, the groan of war,
Reverberate along that vale,
More suited to the shepherd's tale:
Though few the numbers — theirs the strife,
That neither spares nor speaks for life!
Ah! fondly youthful hearts can press,
To seize and share the dear caress:
But Love itself could never pant
For all that Beauty sighs to grant
With half the fervour Hate bestows
Upon the last embrace of foes,
When grappling in the fight they fold
Those arms that ne'er shall lose their hold:
Friends meet to part; Love laughs at faith;
True foes, once met, are join'd till death!

. . . .

With sabre shiver'd to the hilt,
Yet dripping with the blood he spilt;
Yet strain'd within the sever'd hand
Which quivers round that faithless brand;
His turban far behind him roll'd,
And cleft in twain its firmest fold;
His flowing robe by falchion torn,
And crimson as those clouds of morn
That, streak'd with dusky red, portend
The day shall have a stormy end;
A stain on every bush that bore
A fragment of his palampore,

His breast with wounds unnumber'd riven,
His back to earth, his face to heaven,
Fall'n Hassan lies — his unclosed eye
Yet lowering on his enemy,
As if the hour that seal'd his fate
Surviving left his quenchless hate;
And o'er him bends that foe with brow
As dark as his that bled below.

. . . .

'Yes, Leila sleeps beneath the wave,
But his shall be a redder grave;
Her spirit pointed well the steel
Which taught that felon heart to feel.
He call'd the Prophet, but his power
Was vain against the vengeful Giaour:
He call'd on Alla — but the word
Arose unheeded or unheard.
Thou Paynim fool! could Leila's prayer
Be pass'd, and thine accorded there?
I watch'd my time, I leagued with these,
The traitor in his turn to seize;
My wrath is wreak'd, the deed is done,
And now I go — but go alone.'

. . . .

. . . .

The browsing camels' bells are tinkling:
His Mother look'd from her lattice high,
She saw the dews of eve besprinkling
The pasture green beneath her eye,
She saw the planets faintly twinkling:
''T is twilight — sure his train is nigh.'
She could not rest in the garden-bower,
But gazed through the grate of his steepest tower:
'Why comes he not? his steeds are fleet,
Nor shrink they from the summer heat;
Why sends not the Bridegroom his promised gift:
Is his heart more cold, or his barb less swift?
Oh, false reproach! yon Tartar now
Has gain'd our nearest mountain's brow,
And warily the steep descends,
And now within the valley bends;
And he bears the gift at his saddle bow —
How could I deem his courser slow?
Right well my largess shall repay
His welcome speed, and weary way.'

The Tartar lighted at the gate,
But scarce upheld his fainting weight:
His swarthy visage spake distress,
But this might be from weariness;
His garb with sanguine spots was dyed,
But these might be from his courser's side;
He drew the token from his vest —
Angel of Death! 't is Hassan's cloven crest!
His calpac rent — his caftan red —
'Lady, a fearful bride thy Son hath wed:
Me, not from mercy, did they spare,
But this empurpled pledge to bear.
Peace to the brave! whose blood is spilt;
Woe to the Giaour! for his the guilt.'

. . . .

A turban carved in coarsest stone,
A pillar with rank weeds o'ergrown,
Whereon can now be scarcely read
The Koran verse that mourns the dead,
Point out the spot where Hassan fell
A victim in that lonely dell.
There sleeps as true an Osmanlie
As e'er at Mecca bent the knee;
As ever scorn'd forbidden wine,
Or pray'd with face towards the shrine,
In orisons resumed anew
At solemn sound of 'Alla Hu!'
Yet died he by a stranger's hand,
And stranger in his native land;
Yet died he as in arms he stood,
And unavenged, at least in blood.
But him the maids of Paradise
Impatient to their halls invite,
And the dark Heaven of Houris' eyes
On him shall glance for ever bright;
They come — their kerchiefs green they wave,
And welcome with a kiss the brave!
Who falls in battle 'gainst a Giaour
Is worthiest an immortal bower.

. . . .

But thou, false Infidel! shalt writhe
Beneath avenging Monkir's scythe;
And from its torment 'scape alone
To wander round lost Eblis' throne;
And fire unquench'd, unquenchable,
Around, within, thy heart shall dwell;
Nor ear can hear nor tongue can tell
The tortures of that inward hell!
But first, on earth as Vampire sent,
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent:
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race;
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life;
Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
Must feed thy livid living corse.
Thy victims ere they yet expire

Shall know the demon for their sire,
As cursing thee, thou cursing them,
Thy flowers are wither'd on the stem.
But one that for thy crime must fall,
The youngest, most beloved of all,
Shall bless thee with a *father's* name —
That word shall wrap thy heart in flame!
Yet must thou end thy task, and mark
Her cheek's last tinge, her eye's last spark,
And the last glassy glance must view
Which freezes o'er its lifeless blue;
Then with unhallow'd hand shalt tear
The tresses of her yellow hair,
Of which in life a lock when shorn
Affection's fondest pledge was worn;
But now is borne away by thee,
Memorial of thine agony!
Wet with thine own best blood shall drip
Thy gnashing tooth and haggard lip;
Then stalking to thy sullen grave,
Go — and with Gouls and Afrits rave;
Till these in horror shrink away
From spectre more accursed than they!

. . . .

'How name ye yon lone Caloyer?
His features I have scann'd before
In mine own land: 't is many a year,
Since, dashing by the lonely shore,
I saw him urge as fleet a steed
As ever served a horseman's need.
But once I saw that face, yet then
It was so mark'd with inward pain,
I could not pass it by again;
It breathes the same dark spirit now,
As death were stamp'd upon his brow.'

''T is twice three years at summer tide
Since first among our freres he came;
And here it soothes him to abide
For some dark deed he will not name.
But never at our vesper prayer,
Nor e'er before confession chair
Kneels he, nor recks he when arise
Incense or anthem to the skies,
But broods within his cell alone,
His faith and race alike unknown.
The sea from Paynim land he crost,
And here ascended from the coast;
Yet seems he not of Othman race,
But only Christian in his face:
I 'd judge him some stray renegade,
Repentant of the change he made,
Save that he shuns our holy shrine,
Nor tastes the sacred bread and wine.
Great largess to these walls he brought
And thus our abbot's favour bought;
But were I Prior, not a day
Should brook such stranger's further stay,
Or pent within our penance cell
Should doom him there for aye to dwell.
Much in his visions mutters he
Of maiden whelm'd beneath the sea;
Of sabres clashing, foemen flying,
Wrongs avenged, and Moslem dying.
On cliff he hath been known to stand,
And rave as to some bloody hand
Fresh sever'd from its parent limb,
Invisible to all but him,
Which beckons onward to his grave,
And lures to leap into the wave.'

. . . .
. . . .

Dark and unearthly is the scowl
That glares beneath his dusky cowl:
The flash of that dilating eye
Reveals too much of times gone by;
Though varying, indistinct its hue,
Oft will his glance the gazer rue,
For in it lurks that nameless spell,
Which speaks, itself unspeakable,
A spirit yet unquell'd and high,
That claims and keeps ascendancy;
And like the bird whose pinions quake,
But cannot fly the gazing snake,
Will others quail beneath his look,
Nor 'scape the glance they scarce can brook.
From him the half-affrighted Friar
When met alone would fain retire,
As if that eye and bitter smile
Transferr'd to others fear and guile.
Not oft to smile descendeth he,
And when he doth 't is sad to see
That he but mocks at Misery.
How that pale lip will curl and quiver!
Then fix once more as if for ever;
As if his sorrow or disdain
Forbade him e'er to smile again.
Well were it so — such ghastly mirth
From joyaunce ne'er derived its birth.
But sadder still it were to trace
What once were feelings in that face:
Time hath not yet the features fix'd,
But brighter traits with evil mix'd;
And there are hues not always faded,
Which speak a mind not all degraded
Even by the crimes through which it waded.
The common crowd but see the gloom
Of wayward deeds, and fitting doom;

The close observer can espy
A noble soul, and lineage high:
Alas ! though both bestow'd in vain,
Which Grief could change, and Guilt could stain,
It was no vulgar tenement
To which such lofty gifts were lent,
And still with little less than dread
On such the sight is riveted.
The roofless cot, decay'd and rent,
Will scarce delay the passer by;
The tower by war or tempest bent,
While yet may frown one battlement,
Demands and daunts the stranger's eye;
Each ivied arch, and pillar lone,
Pleads haughtily for glories gone !

'His floating robe around him folding,
Slow sweeps he through the column'd aisle;
With dread beheld, with gloom beholding
The rites that sanctify the pile.
But when the anthem shakes the choir,
And kneel the monks, his steps retire;
By yonder lone and wavering torch
His aspect glares within the porch;
There will he pause till all is done —
And hear the prayer, but utter none.
See — by the half-illumined wall
His hood fly back, his dark hair fall,
That pale brow wildly wreathing round,
As if the Gorgon there had bound
The sablest of the serpent-braid
That o'er her fearful forehead stray'd:
For he declines the convent oath,
And leaves those locks' unhallow'd growth,
But wears our garb in all beside;
And, not from piety but pride,
Gives wealth to walls that never heard
Of his one holy vow nor word.
Lo ! — mark ye, as the harmony
Peals louder praises to the sky,
That livid cheek, that stony air
Of mix'd defiance and despair !
Saint Francis, keep him from the shrine !
Else may we dread the wrath divine
Made manifest by awful sign.
If ever evil angel bore
The form of mortal, such he wore:
By all my hope of sins forgiven,
Such looks are not of earth nor heaven !'

To love the softest hearts are prone,
But such can ne'er be all his own;
Too timid in his woes to share,
Too meek to meet, or brave despair;
And sterner hearts alone may feel
The wound that time can never heal.
The rugged metal of the mine
Must burn before its surface shine,
But plunged within the furnace-flame,
It bends and melts — though still the same;
Then temper'd to thy want, or will,
'T will serve thee to defend or kill;
A breastplate for thine hour of need,
Or blade to bid thy foeman bleed;
But if a dagger's form it bear,
Let those who shape its edge, beware !
Thus passion's fire, and woman's art,
Can turn and tame the sterner heart;
From these its form and tone are ta'en,
And what they make it, must remain,
But break — before it bend again.
. . . .

If solitude succeed to grief,
Release from pain is slight relief;
The vacant bosom's wilderness
Might thank the pang that made it less.
We loathe what none are left to share:
Even bliss — 't were woe alone to bear;
The heart once left thus desolate
Must fly at last for ease — to hate.
It is as if the dead could feel
The icy worm around them steal,
And shudder, as the reptiles creep
To revel o'er their rotting sleep,
Without the power to scare away
The cold consumers of their clay !
It is as if the desert-bird,
Whose beak unlocks her bosom's stream
To still her famish'd nestlings' scream,
Nor mourns a life to them transferr'd,
Should rend her rash devoted breast,
And find them flown her empty nest.
The keenest pangs the wretched find
Are rapture to the dreary void,
The leafless desert of the mind,
The waste of feelings unemploy'd.
Who would be doom'd to gaze upon
A sky without a cloud or sun?
Less hideous far the tempest's roar
Than ne'er to brave the billows more —
Thrown, when the war of winds is o'er,
A lonely wreck on fortune's shore,
'Mid sullen calm, and silent bay,
Unseen to drop by dull decay; —
Better to sink beneath the shock
Than moulder piecemeal on the rock !
. . . .

‘Father! thy days have pass’d in peace,
’Mid counted beads, and countless prayer;
To bid the sins of others cease,
Thyself without a crime or care,
Save transient ills that all must bear,
Has been thy lot from youth to age;
And thou wilt bless thee from the rage
Of passions fierce and uncontroll’d,
Such as thy penitents unfold,
Whose secret sins and sorrows rest
Within thy pure and pitying breast.
My days, though few, have pass’d below
In much of joy, but more of woe;
Yet still in hours of love or strife,
I ’ve ’scaped the weariness of life:
Now leagued with friends, now girt by foes,
I loathed the languor of repose.
Now nothing left to love or hate,
No more with hope or pride elate,
I ’d rather be the thing that crawls
Most noxious o’er a dungeon’s walls,
Than pass my dull, unvarying days,
Condemn’d to meditate and gaze.
Yet, lurks a wish within my breast
For rest — but not to feel ’t is rest.
Soon shall my fate that wish fulfil;
And I shall sleep without the dream
Of what I was, and would be still,
Dark as to thee my deeds may seem:
My memory now is but the tomb
Of joys long dead; my hope, their doom:
Though better to have died with those
Than bear a life of lingering woes.
My spirit shrunk not to sustain
The searching throes of ceaseless pain;
Nor sought the self-accorded grave
Of ancient fool and modern knave:
Yet death I have not fear’d to meet;
And in the field it had been sweet,
Had danger woo’d me on to move
The slave of glory, not of love.
I ’ve braved it — not for honour’s boast;
I smile at laurels won or lost;
To such let others carve their way,
For high renown, or hireling pay:
But place again before my eyes
Aught that I deem a worthy prize,
The maid I love, the man I hate;
And I will hunt the steps of fate,
To save or slay, as these require,
Through rending steel, and rolling fire:
Nor need’st thou doubt this speech from one
Who would but do — what he *hath* done.
Death is but what the haughty brave,
The weak must bear, the wretch must crave;
Then let Life go to him who gave:
I have not quail’d to danger’s brow
When high and happy — need I *now?*
. . . .

‘I loved her, Friar! nay, adored —
But these are words that all can use —
I proved it more in deed than word;
There ’s blood upon that dinted sword,
A stain its steel can never lose:
’T was shed for her who died for me,
It warm’d the heart of one abhorr’d.
Nay, start not — no — nor bend thy knee,
Nor midst my sins such act record;
Thou wilt absolve me from the deed,
For he was hostile to thy creed!
The very name of Nazarene
Was wormwood to his Paynim spleen.
Ungrateful fool! since but for brands
Well wielded in some hardy hands,
And wounds by Galileans given,
The surest pass to Turkish heaven,
For him his Houris still might wait
Impatient at the Prophet’s gate.
I loved her — love will find its way
Through paths where wolves would fear to prey;
And if it dares enough, ’t were hard
If passion met not some reward —
No matter how, or where, or why,
I did not vainly seek, nor sigh:
Yet sometimes, with remorse, in vain
I wish she had not loved again.
She died — I dare not tell thee how;
But look — ’t is written on my brow!
There read of Cain the curse and crime,
In characters unworn by time:
Still, ere thou dost condemn me, pause;
Not mine the act, though I the cause.
Yet did he but what I had done
Had she been false to more than one.
Faithless to him, he gave the blow;
But true to me, I laid him low:
Howe’er deserved her doom might be,
Her treachery was truth to me;
To me she gave her heart, that all
Which tyranny can ne’er enthrall;
And I, alas! too late to save!
Yet all I then could give I gave,
’T was some relief, our foe a grave.
His death sits lightly; but her fate
Has made me — what thou well may’st hate.

His doom was seal'd — he knew it well,
Warn'd by the voice of stern Taheer,
Deep in whose darkly boding ear
The deathshot peal'd of murder near,
As filed the troop to where they fell!
He died too in the battle broil,
A time that heeds nor pain nor toil;
One cry to Mahomet for aid,
One prayer to Alla all he made:
He knew and cross'd me in the fray —
I gazed upon him where he lay,
And watch'd his spirit ebb away:
Though pierced like pard by hunters' steel,
He felt not half that now I feel.
I search'd, but vainly search'd, to find
The workings of a wounded mind;
Each feature of that sullen corse
Betray'd his rage, but no remorse.
Oh, what had Vengeance given to trace
Despair upon his dying face!
The late repentance of that hour,
When Penitence hath lost her power
To tear one terror from the grave,
And will not soothe, and cannot save.
. . . .

'The cold in clime are cold in blood,
Their love can scarce deserve the name;
But mine was like a lava flood
That boils in Ætna's breast of flame.
I cannot prate in puling strain
Of ladye-love, and beauty's chain:
If changing cheek, and scorching vein,
Lips taught to writhe, but not complain,
If bursting heart, and madd'ning brain,
And daring deed, and vengeful steel,
And all that I have felt, and feel,
Betoken love — that love was mine,
And shown by many a bitter sign.
'T is true, I could not whine nor sigh,
I knew but to obtain or die.
I die — but first I have possess'd,
And come what may, I *have been* blest.
Shall I the doom I sought upbraid?
No — reft of all, yet undismay'd
But for the thought of Leila slain,
Give me the pleasure with the pain,
So would I live and love again.
I grieve, but not, my holy guide!
For him who dies, but her who died:
She sleeps beneath the wandering wave —
Ah! had she but an earthly grave,
This breaking heart and throbbing head
Should seek and share her narrow bed.
She was a form of life and light,
That, seen, became a part of sight;
And rose, where'er I turn'd mine eye,
The Morning-star of Memory!

'Yes, Love indeed is light from heaven;
A spark of that immortal fire
With angels shared, by Alla given,
To lift from earth our low desire.
Devotion wafts the mind above,
But Heaven itself descends in love;
A feeling from the Godhead caught,
To wean from self each sordid thought;
A Ray of him who form'd the whole;
A Glory circling round the soul!
I grant *my* love imperfect, all
That mortals by the name miscall;
Then deem it evil, what thou wilt;
But say, oh say, *hers* was not guilt!
She was my life's unerring light:
That quench'd, what beam shall break my night?
Oh! would it shone to lead me still,
Although to death or deadliest ill!
Why marvel ye, if they who lose
This present joy, this future hope,
No more with sorrow meekly cope;
In phrensy then their fate accuse;
In madness do those fearful deeds
That seem to add but guilt to woe?
Alas! the breast that inly bleeds
Hath nought to dread from outward blow:
Who falls from all he knows of bliss,
Cares little into what abyss.
Fierce as the gloomy vulture's now
To thee, old man, my deeds appear:
I read abhorrence on thy brow,
And this too was I born to bear!
'T is true, that, like that bird of prey,
With havoc have I mark'd my way:
But this was taught me by the dove,
To die — and know no second love.
This lesson yet hath man to learn,
Taught by the thing he dares to spurn:
The bird that sings within the brake,
The swan that swims upon the lake,
One mate, and one alone, will take.
And let the fool, still prone to range
And sneer on all who cannot change,
Partake his jest with boasting boys;
I envy not his varied joys,
But deem such feeble, heartless man
Less than yon solitary swan;
Far, far beneath the shallow maid
He left believing and betray'd.

Such shame at least was never mine —
Leila! each thought was only thine!
My good, my guilt, my weal, my woe,
My hope on high — my all below.
Earth holds no other like to thee,
Or, if it doth, in vain for me:
For worlds I dare not view the dame
Resembling thee, yet not the same.
The very crimes that mar my youth,
This bed of death — attest my truth!
'T is all too late — thou wert, thou art
The cherish'd madness of my heart!

'And she was lost — and yet I breathed,
  But not the breath of human life:
A serpent round my heart was wreathed,
  And stung my every thought to strife.
Alike all time abhorr'd, all place,
Shuddering I shrunk from Nature's face,
Where every hue that charm'd before
The blackness of my bosom wore.
The rest thou dost already know,
And all my sins, and half my woe.
But talk no more of penitence;
Thou see'st I soon shall part from hence:
And if thy holy tale were true,
The deed that 's done canst *thou* undo?
Think me not thankless — but this grief
Looks not to priesthood for relief.
My soul's estate in secret guess:
But wouldst thou pity more, say less.
When thou canst bid my Leila live,
Then will I sue thee to forgive;
Then plead my cause in that high place
Where purchased masses proffer grace.
Go, when the hunter's hand hath wrung
From forest-cave her shrieking young,
And calm the lonely lioness:
But soothe not — mock not *my* distress!

'In earlier days, and calmer hours,
  When heart with heart delights to blend,
Where bloom my native valley's bowers
  I had — Ah! have I now? — a friend!
To him this pledge I charge thee send,
  Memorial of a youthful vow;
I would remind him of my end:
  Though souls absorb'd like mine allow
Brief thought to distant friendship's claim,
Yet dear to him my blighted name.
'T is strange — he prophesied my doom,
  And I have smiled — I then could smile —
When Prudence would his voice assume,
  And warn — I reck'd not what — the while:
But now remembrance whispers o'er
Those accents scarcely mark'd before.
Say — that his bodings came to pass,
  And he will start to hear their truth,
  And wish his words had not been sooth:
Tell him, unheeding as I was,
  Through many a busy bitter scene
  Of all our golden youth had been
In pain, my faltering tongue had tried
To bless his memory ere I died;
But Heaven in wrath would turn away,
If Guilt should for the guiltless pray.
I do not ask him not to blame,
Too gentle he to wound my name;
And what have I to do with fame?
I do not ask him not to mourn,
Such cold request might sound like scorn;
And what than friendship's manly tear
May better grace a brother's bier?
But bear this ring, his own of old,
And tell him — what thou dost behold!
The wither'd frame, the ruin'd mind,
The wrack by passion left behind,
A shrivell'd scroll, a scatter'd leaf,
Sear'd by the autumn blast of grief!

. . . .

'Tell me no more of fancy's gleam,
No, father, no, 't was not a dream;
Alas! the dreamer first must sleep,
I only watch'd, and wish'd to weep;
But could not, for my burning brow
Throbb'd to the very brain as now:
I wish'd but for a single tear,
As something welcome, new, and dear:
I wish'd it then, I wish it still;
Despair is stronger than my will.
Waste not thine orison, despair
Is mightier than thy pious prayer:
I would not, if I might, be blest;
I want no paradise, but rest.
'T was then, I tell thee, father! then
I saw her; yes, she lived again;
And shining in her white symar,
As through yon pale gray cloud the star
Which now I gaze on, as on her,
Who look'd and looks far lovelier;
Dimly I view its trembling spark;
To-morrow's night shall be more dark;
And I, before its rays appear,
That lifeless thing the living fear.
I wander, father! for my soul
Is fleeting towards the final goal.
I saw her, friar! and I rose
Forgetful of our former woes;

And rushing from my couch, I dart,
And clasp her to my desperate heart;
I clasp — what is it that I clasp?
No breathing form within my grasp,
No heart that beats reply to mine,
Yet, Leila! yet the form is thine!
And art thou, dearest, changed so much,
As meet my eye, yet mock my touch?
Ah! were thy beauties e'er so cold,
I care not; so my arms enfold
The all they ever wish'd to hold.
Alas! around a shadow prest
They shrink upon my lonely breast;
Yet still 't is there! In silence stands,
And beckons with beseeching hands!
With braided hair, and bright-black eye —
I knew 't was false — she could not die!
But *he* is dead! within the dell
I saw him buried where he fell;
He comes not, for he cannot break
From earth; why then art *thou* awake?
They told me wild waves roll'd above
The face I view, the form I love;
They told me — 't was a hideous tale!
I 'd tell it, but my tongue would fail:
If true, and from thine ocean-cave
Thou com'st to claim a calmer grave,
Oh! pass thy dewy fingers o'er
This brow that then will burn no more;
Or place them on my hopeless heart:
But, shape or shade! whate'er thou art,
In mercy ne'er again depart!
Or farther with thee bear my soul
Than winds can waft or waters roll!

. . . .

'Such is my name, and such my tale.
Confessor! to thy secret ear
I breathe the sorrows I bewail,
And thank thee for the generous tear
This glazing eye could never shed.
Then lay me with the humblest dead,
And, save the cross above my head,
Be neither name nor emblem spread,
By prying stranger to be read,
Or stay the passing pilgrim's tread.'

He pass'd — nor of his name and race
Hath left a token or a trace,
Save what the father must not say
Who shrived him on his dying day:
This broken tale was all we knew
Of her he loved, or him he slew.

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS

A TURKISH TALE

> 'Had we never loved sae kindly,
> Had we never loved sae blindly,
> Never met or never parted,
> We had ne'er been broken-hearted.'
> BURNS.

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD HOLLAND,
THIS TALE IS INSCRIBED,
WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF
REGARD AND RESPECT,
BY HIS GRATEFULLY OBLIGED
AND SINCERE FRIEND,
BYRON.

CANTO THE FIRST

I

KNOW ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime,
Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,
Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime?
Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine;
Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppress'd with perfume,
Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gúl in her bloom;
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute:
Where the tints of the earth, and the hues of the sky,
In colour though varied, in beauty may vie,
And the purple of Ocean is deepest in dye;
Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
And all, save the spirit of man, is divine?
'T is the clime of the East; 't is the land of the Sun —
Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done?
Oh! wild as the accents of lovers' farewell
Are the hearts which they bear, and the tales which they tell.

II

Begirt with many a gallant slave
Apparell'd as becomes the brave,
Awaiting each his lord's behest
To guide his steps, or guard his rest,
Old Giaffir sate in his Divan.
Deep thought was in his aged eye;
And though the face of Mussulman
Not oft betrays to standers by
The mind within, well skill'd to hide
All but unconquerable pride,
His pensive cheek and pondering brow
Did more than he was wont avow.

III

'Let the chamber be clear'd.' — The train disappear'd —
'Now call me the chief of the Haram guard.'
With Giaffir is none but his only son,
And the Nubian awaiting the sire's award.
'Haroun — when all the crowd that wait
Are pass'd beyond the outer gate
(Woe to the head whose eye beheld
My child Zuleika's face unveil'd !),
Hence, lead my daughter from her tower;
Her fate is fix'd this very hour:
Yet not to her repeat my thought;
By me alone be duty taught !'

'Pacha ! to hear is to obey.'
No more must slave to despot say —
Then to the tower had ta'en his way:
But here young Selim silence brake,
First lowly rendering reverence meet;
And downcast look'd, and gently spake,
Still standing at the Pacha's feet:
For son of Moslem must expire,
Ere dare to sit before his sire !

Father ! for fear that thou shouldst chide
My sister, or her sable guide,
Know — for the fault, if fault there be,
Was mine, then fall thy frowns on me —
So lovelily the morning shone,
That — let the old and weary sleep —
I could not; and to view alone
The fairest scenes of land and deep,
With none to listen and reply
To thoughts with which my heart beat high,
Were irksome — for whate'er my mood,
In sooth I love not solitude.
I on Zuleika's slumber broke,
And, as thou knowest that for me
Soon turns the Haram's grating key,
Before the guardian slaves awoke
We to the cypress groves had flown,
And made earth, main, and heaven our own !
There linger'd we, beguiled too long,
With Mejnoun's tale, or Sadi's song;
Till I, who heard the deep tambour
Beat thy Divan's approaching hour,
To thee, and to my duty true,
Warn'd by the sound, to greet thee flew.
But there Zuleika wanders yet —
Nay, Father, rage not — nor forget
That none can pierce that secret bower
But those who watch the women's tower.'

IV

'Son of a slave,' the Pacha said,
'From unbelieving mother bred,
Vain were a father's hope to see
Aught that beseems a man in thee.
Thou, when thine arm should bend the bow,
And hurl the dart, and curb the steed,
Thou, Greek in soul if not in creed,
Must pore where babbling waters flow,
And watch unfolding roses blow.
Would that yon orb, whose matin glow
Thy listless eyes so much admire,
Would lend thee something of his fire !
Thou, who wouldst see this battlement
By Christian cannon piecemeal rent;
Nay, tamely view old Stambol's wall
Before the dogs of Moscow fall,
Nor strike one stroke for life and death
Against the curs of Nazareth !
Go — let thy less than woman's hand
Assume the distaff — not the brand.
But, Haroun ! — to my daughter speed:
And hark — of thine own head take heed —
If thus Zuleika oft takes wing —
Thou see'st yon bow — it hath a string !'

V

No sound from Selim's lip was heard,
At least that met old Giaffir's ear,
But every frown and every word
Pierced keener than a Christian sword.
'Son of a slave ! — reproach'd with fear !
Those gibes had cost another dear.

Son of a slave! — and *who* my sire?'
Thus held his thoughts their dark career;
And glances ev'n of more than ire
Flash forth, then faintly disappear.
Old Giaffir gazed upon his son
And started; for within his eye
He read how much his wrath had done;
He saw rebellion there begun.
'Come hither, boy — what, no reply?
I mark thee — and I know thee too;
But there be deeds thou dar'st not do:
But if thy beard had manlier length,
And if thy hand had skill and strength,
I 'd joy to see thee break a lance,
Albeit against my own perchance.'

As sneeringly these accents fell,
On Selim's eye he fiercely gazed:
That eye return'd him glance for glance,
And proudly to his sire's was raised,
Till Giaffir's quail'd and shrunk askance —
And why — he felt, but durst not tell.
'Much I misdoubt this wayward boy
Will one day work me more annoy.
I never loved him from his birth,
And — but his arm is little worth,
And scarcely in the chase could cope
With timid fawn or antelope,
Far less would venture into strife
Where man contends for fame and life —
I would not trust that look or tone:
No, nor the blood so near my own.
That blood — he hath not heard — no more —
I 'll watch him closer than before.
He is an Arab to my sight,
Or Christian crouching in the fight —
But hark! — I hear Zuleika's voice;
Like Houris' hymn it meets mine ear:
She is the offspring of my choice;
Oh! more than ev'n her mother dear,
With all to hope, and nought to fear —
My Peri! ever welcome here!
Sweet as the desert fountain's wave
To lips just cool'd in time to save,
Such to my longing sight art thou;
Nor can they waft to Mecca's shrine
More thanks for life, than I for thine,
Who blest thy birth and bless thee now.'

VI

Fair as the first that fell of womankind,
When on that dread yet lovely serpent smiling,
Whose image then was stamp'd upon her mind —
But once beguiled and ever more beguiling;
Dazzling as that, oh! too transcendent vision
To Sorrow's phantom-peopled slumber given,
When heart meets heart again in dreams Elysian,
And paints the lost on Earth revived in Heaven;
Soft as the memory of buried love;
Pure as the prayer which Childhood wafts above;
Was she, the daughter of that rude old Chief
Who met the maid with tears — but not of grief.

Who hath not proved how feebly words essay
To fix one spark of Beauty's heavenly ray?
Who doth not feel, until his failing sight
Faints into dimness with its own delight,
His changing cheek, his sinking heart confess
The might, the majesty of Loveliness?
Such was Zuleika, such around her shone
The nameless charms unmark'd by her alone, —
The light of love, the purity of grace,
The mind, the Music breathing from her face,
The heart whose softness harmonized the whole:
And, oh! that eye was in itself a Soul!

Her graceful arms in meekness bending
Across her gently-budding breast;
At one kind word those arms extending
To clasp the neck of him who blest
His child caressing and carest,
Zuleika came; and Giaffir felt
His purpose half within him melt.
Not that against her fancied weal
His heart though stern could ever feel;
Affection chain'd her to that heart;
Ambition tore the links apart.

VII

'Zuleika! child of gentleness!
How dear this very day must tell,
When I forget my own distress,
In losing what I love so well,
To bid thee with another dwell —
Another! and a braver man
Was never seen in battle's van.
We Moslem reck not much of blood;
But yet the line of Carasman
Unchanged, unchangeable hath stood
First of the bold Timariot bands
That won and well can keep their lands.
Enough that he who comes to woo
Is kinsman of the Bey Oglou:
His years need scarce a thought employ;
I would not have thee wed a boy.
And thou shalt have a noble dower:
And his and my united power
Will laugh to scorn the death-firman,
Which others tremble but to scan,
And teach the messenger what fate
The bearer of such boon may wait.
And now thou know'st thy father's will;
All that thy sex hath need to know:
'T was mine to teach obedience still —
The way to love, thy lord may show.'

VIII

In silence bow'd the virgin's head;
And if her eye was fill'd with tears
That stifled feeling dare not shed,
And changed her cheek from pale to red,
And red to pale, as through her ears
Those wingèd words like arrows sped,
What could such be but maiden fears?
So bright the tear in Beauty's eye,
Love half regrets to kiss it dry;
So sweet the blush of Bashfulness,
Even Pity scarce can wish it less!

Whate'er it was the sire forgot;
Or if remember'd, mark'd it not;
Thrice clapp'd his hands, and call'd his steed,
Resign'd his gem-adorn'd chibouque,
And mounting featly for the mead,
With Maugrabee and Mamaluke,
His way amid his Delis took,
To witness many an active deed
With sabre keen or blunt jerreed.
The Kislar only and his Moors
Watch well the Haram's massy doors.

IX

His head was leant upon his hand,
His eye look'd o'er the dark blue water
That swiftly glides and gently swells
Between the winding Dardanelles;
But yet he saw nor sea nor strand,
Nor even his Pacha's turban'd band
Mix in the game of mimic slaughter,
Careering cleave the folded felt
With sabre stroke right sharply dealt;
Nor mark'd the javelin-darting crowd,
Nor heard their Ollahs wild and loud —
He thought but of old Giaffir's daughter!

X

No word from Selim's bosom broke;
One sigh Zuleika's thought bespoke:
Still gazed he through the lattice grate,
Pale, mute, and mournfully sedate.
To him Zuleika's eye was turn'd,
But little from his aspect learn'd;
Equal her grief, yet not the same;
Her heart confess'd a gentler flame:
But yet that heart, alarm'd or weak,
She knew not why, forbade to speak.
Yet speak she must — but when essay?
'How strange he thus should turn away!
Not thus we e'er before have met;
Not thus shall be our parting yet.'
Thrice paced she slowly through the room,
And watch'd his eye — it still was fix'd:
She snatch'd the urn wherein was mix'd
The Persian Atar-gul's perfume,
And sprinkled all its odours o'er
The pictured roof and marble floor:
The drops, that through his glittering vest
The playful girl's appeal address'd,
Unheeded o'er his bosom flew,
As if that breast were marble too.
'What, sullen yet? it must not be —
Oh! gentle Selim, this from thee!'
She saw in curious order set
The fairest flowers of eastern land —
'He loved them once; may touch them yet,
If offer'd by Zuleika's hand.'
The childish thought was hardly breathed
Before the Rose was pluck'd and wreathed;
The next fond moment saw her seat
Her fairy form at Selim's feet:
'This rose to calm my brother's cares
A message from the Bulbul bears;

It says to-night he will prolong
For Selim's ear his sweetest song;
And though his note is somewhat sad,
He 'll try for once a strain more glad,
With some faint hope his alter'd lay
May sing these gloomy thoughts away.

XI

‘What ! not receive my foolish flower ?
Nay then I am indeed unblest:
On me can thus thy forehead lower ?
And know'st thou not who loves thee best ?
Oh, Selim dear ! oh, more than dearest !
Say, is it me thou hat'st or fearest ?
Come, lay thy head upon my breast,
And I will kiss thee into rest,
Since words of mine, and songs must fail,
Ev'n from my fabled nightingale.
I knew our sire at times was stern,
But this from thee had yet to learn:
Too well I know he loves thee not;
But is Zuleika's love forgot ?
Ah ! deem I right ? the Pacha's plan —
This kinsman Bey of Carasman
Perhaps may prove some foe of thine;
If so, I swear by Mecca's shrine,
If shrines that ne'er approach allow
To woman's step admit her vow,
Without thy free consent, command,
The Sultan should not have my hand !
Think'st thou that I could bear to part
With thee, and learn to halve my heart ?
Ah ! were I sever'd from thy side,
Where were thy friend — and who my guide ?
Years have not seen, Time shall not see
The hour that tears my soul from thee:
Even Azrael, from his deadly quiver
When flies that shaft, and fly it must,
That parts all else, shall doom for ever
Our hearts to undivided dust !'

XII

He lived — he breathed — he moved — he felt;
He raised the maid from where she knelt;
His trance was gone — his keen eye shone
With thoughts that long in darkness dwelt;
With thoughts that burn — in rays that melt.
As the stream late conceal'd
By the fringe of its willows,
When it rushes reveal'd
In the light of its billows;
As the bolt bursts on high
From the black cloud that bound it,
Flash'd the soul of that eye
Through the long lashes round it.
A war-horse at the trumpet's sound,
A lion roused by heedless hound,
A tyrant waked to sudden strife
By graze of ill-directed knife,
Starts not to more convulsive life
Than he, who heard that vow, display'd,
And all, before repress'd, betray'd:
‘Now thou art mine, for ever mine,
With life to keep, and scarce with life resign;
Now thou art mine, that sacred oath,
Though sworn by one, hath bound us both.
Yes, fondly, wisely hast thou done;
That vow hath saved more heads than one;
But blench not thou — thy simplest tress
Claims more from me than tenderness;
I would not wrong the slenderest hair,
That clusters round thy forehead fair,
For all the treasures buried far
Within the caves of Istakar.
This morning clouds upon me lower'd,
Reproaches on my head were shower'd,
And Giaffir almost call'd me coward !
Now I have motive to be brave;
The son of his neglected slave, —
Nay, start not, 't was the term he gave, —
May show, though little apt to vaunt,
A heart his words nor deeds can daunt.
His son, indeed ! — yet, thanks to thee,
Perchance I am, at least shall be;
But let our plighted secret vow
Be only known to us as now.
I know the wretch who dares demand
From Giaffir thy reluctant hand;
More ill-got wealth, a meaner soul
Holds not a Musselim's control:
Was he not bred in Egripo ?
A viler race let Israel show;
But let that pass — to none be told
Our oath; the rest shall time unfold.
To me and mine leave Osman Bey;
I 've partisans for peril's day:
Think not I am what I appear;
I 've arms, and friends, and vengeance near.'

XIII

‘Think not thou art what thou appearest !
My Selim, thou art sadly changed:

This morn I saw thee gentlest, dearest;
But now thou ’rt from thyself estranged.
My love thou surely knew’st before,
It ne’er was less, nor can be more.
To see thee, hear thee, near thee stay,
And hate the night I know not why,
Save that we meet not but by day;
With thee to live, with thee to die,
I dare not to my hope deny:
Thy cheek, thine eyes, thy lips to kiss,
Like this — and this — no more than this:
For, Alla! sure thy lips are flame:
What fever in thy veins is flushing?
My own have nearly caught the same,
At least I feel my cheek, too, blushing.
To soothe thy sickness, watch thy health,
Partake, but never waste thy wealth,
Or stand with smiles unmurmuring by,
And lighten half thy poverty;
Do all but close thy dying eye,
For that I could not live to try;
To these alone my thoughts aspire:
More can I do? or thou require?
But, Selim, thou must answer why
We need so much of mystery:
The cause I cannot dream nor tell,
But be it, since thou say’st ’t is well;
Yet what thou mean’st by “arms” and “friends,”
Beyond my weaker sense extends.
I meant that Giaffir should have heard
The very vow I plighted thee;
His wrath would not revoke my word:
But surely he would leave me free.
Can this fond wish seem strange in me,
To be what I have ever been?
What other hath Zuleika seen
From simple childhood’s earliest hour?
What other can she seek to see
Than thee, companion of her bower,
The partner of her infancy?
These cherish’d thoughts with life begun,
Say, why must I no more avow?
What change is wrought to make me shun
The truth; my pride, and thine till now?
To meet the gaze of stranger’s eyes
Our law, our creed, our God denies;
Nor shall one wandering thought of mine
At such, our Prophet’s will, repine:
No! happier made by that decree!
He left me all in leaving thee.
Deep were my anguish, thus compell’d
To wed with one I ne’er beheld:
This wherefore should I not reveal?
Why wilt thou urge me to conceal?
I know the Pacha’s haughty mood
To thee hath never boded good;
And he so often storms at nought,
Allah! forbid that e’er he ought!
And why, I know not, but within
My heart concealment weighs like sin.
If then such secrecy be crime,
And such it feels while lurking here;
Oh, Selim! tell me yet in time,
Nor leave me thus to thoughts of fear.
Ah! yonder see the Tchocadar,
My father leaves the mimic war;
I tremble now to meet his eye —
Say, Selim, canst thou tell me why?’

XIV

‘Zuleika, to thy tower’s retreat
Betake thee — Giaffir I can greet:
And now with him I fain must prate
Of firmans, imposts, levies, state.
There ’s fearful news from Danube’s banks,
Our Vizier nobly thins his ranks,
For which the Giaour may give him thanks!
Our Sultan hath a shorter way
Such costly triumph to repay.
But, mark me, when the twilight drum
Hath warn’d the troops to food and sleep,
Unto thy cell will Selim come:
Then softly from the Haram creep
Where we may wander by the deep:
Our garden-battlements are steep;
Nor these will rash intruder climb
To list our words, or stint our time;
And if he doth, I want not steel
Which some have felt, and more may feel.
Then shalt thou learn of Selim more
Than thou hast heard or thought before:
Trust me, Zuleika — fear not me!
Thou know’st I hold a Haram key.’

‘Fear thee, my Selim! ne’er till now
Did word like this —’
‘Delay not thou;
I keep the key — and Haroun’s guard
Have *some*, and hope of *more* reward.
To-night, Zuleika, thou shalt hear
My tale, my purpose, and my fear:
I am not, love! what I appear.’

CANTO THE SECOND

I

The winds are high on Helle's wave,
As on that night of stormy water
When Love, who sent, forgot to save
The young, the beautiful, the brave,
The lonely hope of Sestos' daughter.
Oh! when alone along the sky
Her turret-torch was blazing high,
Though rising gale and breaking foam
And shrieking sea-birds warn'd him home;
And clouds aloft and tides below,
With signs and sounds, forbade to go,
He could not see, he would not hear,
Or sound or sign foreboding fear;
His eye but saw that light of love,
The only star it hail'd above;
His ear but rang with Hero's song,
'Ye waves, divide not lovers long!' —
That tale is old, but love anew
May nerve young hearts to prove as true.

II

The winds are high, and Helle's tide
Rolls darkly heaving to the main;
And Night's descending shadows hide
That field with blood bedew'd in vain,
The desert of old Priam's pride;
The tombs, sole relics of his reign,
All — save immortal dreams that could beguile
The blind old man of Scio's rocky isle!

III

Oh! yet—for there my steps have been:
These feet have press'd the sacred shore,
These limbs that buoyant wave hath borne —
Minstrel! with thee to muse, to mourn,
To trace again those fields of yore,
Believing every hillock green
Contains no fabled hero's ashes,
And that around the undoubted scene
Thine own 'broad Hellespont' still dashes,
Be long my lot! and cold were he
Who there could gaze denying thee!

IV

The night hath closed on Helle's stream,
Nor yet hath risen on Ida's hill
That moon, which shone on his high theme:
No warrior chides her peaceful beam,
But conscious shepherds bless it still.
Their flocks are grazing on the mound
Of him who felt the Dardan's arrow:
That mighty heap of gather'd ground
Which Ammon's son ran proudly round,
By nations raised, by monarchs crown'd,
Is now a lone and nameless barrow!
Within — thy dwelling-place how narrow!
Without — can only strangers breathe
The name of him that *was* beneath:
Dust long outlasts the storied stone;
But Thou — thy very dust is gone!

V

Late, late to-night will Dian cheer
The swain, and chase the boatman's fear;
Till then — no beacon on the cliff
May shape the course of struggling skiff;
The scatter'd lights that skirt the bay,
All, one by one, have died away;
The only lamp of this lone hour
Is glimmering in Zuleika's tower.
Yes! there is light in that lone chamber,
And o'er her silken Ottoman
Are thrown the fragrant beads of amber,
O'er which her fairy fingers ran;
Near these, with emerald rays beset
(How could she thus that gem forget?),
Her mother's sainted amulet,
Whereon engraved the Koorsee text
Could smooth this life and win the next;
And by her comboloio lies
A Koran of illumined dyes;
And many a bright emblazon'd rhyme
By Persian scribes redeem'd from time;
And o'er those scrolls, not oft so mute,
Reclines her now neglected lute;
And round her lamp of fretted gold
Bloom flowers in urns of China's mould;
The richest work of Iran's loom,
And Sheeraz' tribute of perfume;
All that can eye or sense delight
Are gather'd in that gorgeous room:
But yet it hath an air of gloom.
She, of this Peri cell the sprite,
What doth she hence, and on so rude night?

VI

Wrapt in the darkest sable vest,
Which none save noblest Moslem wear,

To guard from winds of heaven the breast
As heaven itself to Selim dear,
With cautious steps the thicket threading,
And starting oft, as through the glade
The gust its hollow moanings made,
Till, on the smoother pathway treading,
More free her timid bosom beat,
The maid pursued her silent guide;
And though her terror urged retreat,
How could she quit her Selim's side?
How teach her tender lips to chide?

VII

They reach'd at length a grotto, hewn
By nature but enlarged by art,
Where oft her lute she wont to tune,
And oft her Koran conn'd apart;
And oft in youthful revery
She dream'd what Paradise might be:
Where woman's parted soul shall go
Her Prophet had disdain'd to show;
But Selim's mansion was secure,
Nor deem'd she, could he long endure
His bower in other worlds of bliss,
Without *her*, most beloved in this!
Oh! who so dear with him could dwell?
What Houri soothe him half so well?

VIII

Since last she visited the spot
Some change seem'd wrought within the grot.
It might be only that the night
Disguised things seen by better light:
That brazen lamp but dimly threw
A ray of no celestial hue;
But in a nook within the cell
Her eye on stranger objects fell.
There arms were piled, not such as wield
The turban'd Delis in the field;
But brands of foreign blade and hilt,
And one was red — perchance with guilt!
Ah! how without can blood be spilt?
A cup too on the board was set
That did not seem to hold sherbet.
What may this mean? she turn'd to see
Her Selim — 'Oh! can this be he?'

IX

His robe of pride was thrown aside,
His brow no high-crown'd turban bore,
But in its stead a shawl of red,
Wreathed lightly round, his temples wore.
That dagger, on whose hilt the gem
Were worthy of a diadem,
No longer glitter'd at his waist,
Where pistols unadorn'd were braced;
And from his belt a sabre swung,
And from his shoulder loosely hung
The cloak of white; the thin capote
That decks the wandering Candiote;
Beneath, his golden plated vest
Clung like a cuirass to his breast;
The greaves below his knee that wound
With silvery scales were sheathed and bound.
But were it not that high command
Spake in his eye, and tone, and hand,
All that a careless eye could see
In him was some young Galiongée.

X

'I said I was not what I seem'd,
And now thou see'st my words were true;
I have a tale thou hast not dream'd,
If sooth — its truth must others rue.
My story now 't were vain to hide,
I must not see thee Osman's bride:
But had not thine own lips declared
How much of that young heart I shared,
I could not, must not, yet have shown
The darker secret of my own.
In this I speak not now of love;
That, let time, truth, and peril prove:
But first — Oh! never wed another —
Zuleika! I am not thy brother!'

XI

'Oh! not my brother! — yet unsay —
God! am I left alone on earth
To mourn — I dare not curse — the day
That saw my solitary birth?
Oh! thou wilt love me now no more!
My sinking heart foreboded ill;
But know *me* all I was before,
Thy sister — friend — Zuleika still.
Thou led'st me here perchance to kill;
If thou hast cause for vengeance, see!
My breast is offer'd — take thy fill!
Far better with the dead to be
Than live thus nothing now to thee:
Perhaps far worse, for now I know
Why Giaffir always seem'd thy foe;
And I, alas! am Giaffir's child,
For whom thou wert contemn'd, reviled.
If not thy sister — wouldst thou save
My life, Oh! bid me be thy slave!'

XII

‘My slave, Zuleika! — nay, I 'm thine:
But, gentle love, this transport calm,
Thy lot shall yet be link'd with mine;
I swear it by our Prophet's shrine,
And be that thought thy sorrow's balm.
So may the Koran verse display'd
Upon its steel direct my blade
In danger's hour to guard us both,
As I preserve that awful oath!
The name in which thy heart hath prided
Must change; but, my Zuleika, know,
That tie is widen'd, not divided,
Although thy Sire 's my deadliest foe.
My father was to Giaffir all
That Selim late was deem'd to thee;
That brother wrought a brother's fall,
But spared, at least, my infancy:
And lull'd me with a vain deceit
That yet a like return may meet.
He rear'd me, not with tender help,
But like the nephew of a Cain;
He watch'd me like a lion's whelp,
That gnaws and yet may break his chain.
My father's blood in every vein
Is boiling; but for thy dear sake
No present vengeance will I take;
Though here I must no more remain.
But first, beloved Zuleika! hear
How Giaffir wrought this deed of fear.

XIII

‘How first their strife to rancour grew,
If love or envy made them foes,
It matters little if I knew;
In fiery spirits, slights, though few
And thoughtless, will disturb repose.
In war Abdallah's arm was strong,
Remember'd yet in Bosniac song,
And Paswan's rebel hordes attest
How little love they bore such guest:
His death is all I need relate,
The stern effect of Giaffir's hate;
And how my birth, disclosed to me,
Whate'er beside it makes, hath made me free.

XIV

‘When Paswan, after years of strife,
At last for power, but first for life,
In Widdin's walls too proudly sate,
Our Pachas rallied round the state;
Nor last nor least in high command,
Each brother led a separate band;
They gave their horse-tails to the wind,
And mustering in Sophia's plain
Their tents were pitch'd, their post assign'd;
To one, alas! assign'd in vain!
What need of words? the deadly bowl,
By Giaffir's orders drugg'd and given,
With venom subtle as his soul,
Dismiss'd Abdallah's hence to heaven.
Reclined and feverish in the bath,
He, when the hunter's sport was up,
But little deem'd a brother's wrath
To quench his thirst had such a cup:
The bowl a bribed attendant bore;
He drank one draught nor needed more!
If thou my tale, Zuleika, doubt,
Call Haroun — he can tell it out.

XV

‘The deed once done, and Paswan's feud
In part suppress'd, though ne'er subdued,
Abdallah's Pachalick was gain'd.
Thou know'st not what in our Divan
Can wealth procure for worse than man:
Abdallah's honours were obtain'd
By him a brother's murder stain'd;
'T is true, the purchase nearly drain'd
His ill got treasure, soon replaced.
Wouldst question whence? Survey the waste,
And ask the squalid peasant how
His gains repay his broiling brow! —
Why me the stern usurper spared,
Why thus with me his palace shared,
I know not. Shame, regret, remorse,
And little fear from infant's force;
Besides, adoption as a son
By him whom Heaven accorded none,
Or some unknown cabal, caprice,
Preserved me thus; — but not in peace.
He cannot curb his haughty mood,
Nor I forgive a father's blood.

XVI

‘Within thy father's house are foes;
Not all who break his bread are true:
To these should I my birth disclose,
His days, his very hours were few:
They only want a heart to lead,
A hand to point them to the deed.
But Haroun only knows, or knew
This tale whose close is almost nigh:
He in Abdallah's palace grew,
And held that post in his Serai
Which holds he here — he saw him die.

But what could single slavery do?
Avenge his lord? alas! too late;
Or save his son from such a fate?
He chose the last, and when elate
With foes subdued, or friends betray'd,
Proud Giaffir in high triumph sate,
He led me helpless to his gate,
And not in vain it seems essay'd
To save the life for which he pray'd.
The knowledge of my birth secured
From all and each, but most from me,
Thus Giaffir's safety was ensured.
Removed he too from Roumelie
To this our Asiatic side,
Far from our seats by Danube's tide,
With none but Haroun, who retains
Such knowledge — and that Nubian feels
A tyrant's secrets are but chains,
From which the captive gladly steals,
And this and more to me reveals:
Such still to guilt just Alla sends —
Slaves, tools, accomplices — no friends!

XVII

'All this, Zuleika, harshly sounds;
But harsher still my tale must be:
Howe'er my tongue thy softness wounds,
Yet I must prove all truth to thee.
I saw thee start this garb to see,
Yet is it one I oft have worn,
And long must wear: this Galiongée,
To whom thy plighted vow is sworn,
Is leader of those pirate hordes
Whose laws and lives are on their swords;
To hear whose desolating tale
Would make thy waning cheek more pale.
Those arms thou see'st my band have brought,
The hands that wield are not remote;
This cup too for the rugged knaves
Is fill'd — once quaff'd, they ne'er repine:
Our Prophet might forgive the slaves;
They 're only infidels in wine.

XVIII

'What could I be? Proscribed at home,
And taunted to a wish to roam;
And listless left — for Giaffir's fear
Denied the courser and the spear —
Though oft — Oh, Mahomet! how oft! —
In full Divan the despot scoff'd,
As if *my* weak unwilling hand
Refused the bridle or the brand.
He ever went to war alone,
And pent me here untried, unknown;
To Haroun's care with women left,
By hope unblest, of fame bereft,
While thou — whose softness long endear'd,
Though it unmann'd me, still had cheer'd —
To Brusa's walls for safety sent,
Awaitedst there the field's event.
Haroun, who saw my spirit pining
Beneath inaction's sluggish yoke,
His captive, though with dread resigning,
My thraldom for a season broke,
On promise to return before
The day when Giaffir's charge was o'er.
'T is vain — my tongue can not impart
My almost drunkenness of heart,
When first this liberated eye
Survey'd Earth, Ocean, Sun, and Sky,
As if my spirit pierced them through,
And all their inmost wonders knew!
One word alone can paint to thee
That more than feeling — I was Free!
E'en for thy presence ceased to pine;
The World — nay, Heaven itself was mine!

XIX

'The shallop of a trusty Moor
Convey'd me from this idle shore;
I long'd to see the isles that gem
Old Ocean's purple diadem:
I sought by turns, and saw them all.
But when and where I join'd the crew,
With whom I 'm pledged to rise or fall
When all that we design to do
Is done, 't will then be time more meet
To tell thee, when the tale 's complete.

XX

''T is true, they are a lawless brood,
But rough in form, nor mild in mood;
And every creed and every race
With them hath found, may find a place:
But open speech, and ready hand,
Obedience to their chief's command;
A soul for every enterprise,
That never sees with Terror's eyes;
Friendship for each, and faith to all,
And vengeance vow'd for those who fall,
Have made them fitting instruments
For more than ev'n my own intents.
And some — and I have studied all
Distinguish'd from the vulgar rank,

But chiefly to my council call
The wisdom of the cautious Frank —
And some to higher thoughts aspire.
The last of Lambro's patriots there
Anticipated freedom share;
And oft around the cavern fire
On visionary schemes debate,
To snatch the Rayahs from their fate.
So let them ease their hearts with prate
Of equal rights, which man ne'er knew;
I have a love for freedom too.
Ay! let me like the ocean-Patriarch roam,
Or only know on land the Tartar's home!
My tent on shore, my galley on the sea,
Are more than cities and Serais to me:
Borne by my steed, or wafted by my sail,
Across the desert, or before the gale,
Bound where thou wilt, my barb! or glide, my prow!
But be the star that guides the wanderer, Thou!
Thou, my Zuleika, share and bless my bark;
The Dove of peace and promise to mine ark!
Or, since that hope denied in worlds of strife,
Be thou the rainbow to the storms of life!
The evening beam that smiles the clouds away,
And tints to-morrow with prophetic ray!
Blest — as the Muezzin's strain from Mecca's wall
To pilgrims pure and prostrate at his call;
Soft — as the melody of youthful days,
That steals the trembling tear of speechless praise;
Dear — as his native song to Exile's ears,
Shall sound each tone thy long-loved voice endears.
For thee in those bright isles is built a bower
Blooming as Aden in its earliest hour.
A thousand swords, with Selim's heart and hand,
Wait — wave — defend — destroy — at thy command!
Girt by my band, Zuleika at my side,
The spoil of nations shall bedeck my bride.
The Haram's languid years of listless ease
Are well resign'd for cares — for joys like these.
Not blind to fate, I see, where'er I rove,
Unnumber'd perils, — but one only love!
Yet well my toils shall that fond breast repay,
Though fortune frown, or falser friends betray.
How dear the dream in darkest hours of ill,
Should all be changed, to find thee faithful still!
Be but thy soul, like Selim's, firmly shown;
To thee be Selim's tender as thine own;
To soothe each sorrow, share in each delight,
Blend every thought, do all — but disunite!
Once free, 'tis mine our horde again to guide;
Friends to each other, foes to aught beside:
Yet there we follow but the bent assign'd
By fatal Nature to man's warring kind:
Mark! where his carnage and his conquests cease!
He makes a solitude, and calls it — peace!
I, like the rest, must use my skill or strength,
But ask no land beyond my sabre's length:
Power sways but by division, her resource
The blest alternative of fraud or force!
Ours be the last; in time deceit may come
When cities cage us in a social home:
There ev'n thy soul might err — how oft the heart
Corruption shakes which peril could not part!
And woman, more than man, when death or woe
Or even Disgrace would lay her lover low,
Sunk in the lap of Luxury will shame —
Away suspicion! — *not* Zuleika's name!
But life is hazard at the best; and here
No more remains to win, and much to fear:
Yes, fear! — the doubt, the dread of losing thee,
By Osman's power, and Giaffir's stern decree.
That dread shall vanish with the favouring gale,
Which love to-night hath promised to my sail:
No danger daunts the pair his smile hath blest,
Their steps still roving, but their hearts at rest.
With thee all toils are sweet, each clime hath charms;
Earth — sea alike — our world within our arms!

Ay — let the loud winds whistle o'er the deck,
So that those arms cling closer round my neck:
The deepest murmur of this lip shall be
No sigh for safety, but a prayer for thee!
The war of elements no fears impart
To Love, whose deadliest bane is human Art:
There lie the only rocks our course can check;
Here moments menace — *there* are years of wreck!
But hence ye thoughts that rise in Horror's shape!
This hour bestows, or ever bars escape.
Few words remain of mine my tale to close;
Of thine but *one* to waft us from our foes;
Yea, foes — to me will Giaffir's hate decline?
And is not Osman, who would part us, thine?

XXI

'His head and faith from doubt and death
Return'd in time my guard to save;
Few heard, none told, that o'er the wave
From isle to isle I roved the while:
And since, though parted from my band,
Too seldom now I leave the land,
No deed they 've done, nor deed shall do,
Ere I have heard and doom'd it too:
I form the plan, decree the spoil,
'T is fit I oftener share the toil.
But now too long I 've held thine ear;
Time presses, floats my bark, and here
We leave behind but hate and fear.
To-morrow Osman with his train
Arrives — to-night must break thy chain:
And would'st thou save that haughty Bey,
Perchance, *his* life who gave thee thine,
With me this hour away — away!
But yet, though thou art plighted mine,
Would'st thou recall thy willing vow,
Appall'd by truths imparted now,
Here rest I — not to see thee wed:
But be that peril on *my* head!'

XXII

Zuleika, mute and motionless,
Stood like that statue of distress,
When, her last hope for ever gone,
The mother harden'd into stone;
All in the maid that eye could see
Was but a younger Niobé.
But ere her lip, or even her eye,
Essay'd to speak, or look reply,
Beneath the garden's wicket porch
Far flash'd on high a blazing torch!
Another — and another — and another —
'Oh! fly — no more — yet now my more than brother!'
Far, wide, through every thicket spread,
The fearful lights are gleaming red;
Nor these alone, for each right hand
Is ready with a sheathless brand.
They part, pursue, return, and wheel
With searching flambeau, shining steel;
And last of all, his sabre waving,
Stern Giaffir in his fury raving:
And now almost they touch the cave —
Oh! must that grot be Selim's grave?

XXIII

Dauntless he stood! — 'T is come — soon past —
One kiss, Zuleika — 't is my last.
But yet my band not far from shore
May hear this signal, see the flash;
Yet now too few — the attempt were rash:
No matter — yet one effort more.'
Forth to the cavern mouth he stept;
His pistol's echo rang on high,
Zuleika started not, nor wept,
Despair benumb'd her breast and eye! —
'They hear me not, or if they ply
Their oars, 't is but to see me die;
That sound hath drawn my foes more nigh.
Then forth my father's scimitar,
Thou ne'er hast seen less equal war!
Farewell, Zuleika! — Sweet! retire:
Yet stay within — here linger safe,
At thee his rage will only chafe.
Stir not, lest even to thee perchance
Some erring blade or ball should glance.
Fear'st thou for him? — may I expire
If in this strife I seek thy sire!
No — though by him that poison pour'd:
No — though again he call me coward!
But tamely shall I meet their steel?
No — as each crest save *his* may feel!'

XXIV

One bound he made, and gain'd the sand:
Already at his feet hath sunk
The foremost of the prying band,
A gasping head, a quivering trunk.

Another falls — but round him close
A swarming circle of his foes;
From right to left his path he cleft,
And almost met the meeting wave:
His boat appears — not five oars’ length —
His comrades strain with desperate strength —
Oh! are they yet in time to save?
His feet the foremost breakers lave;
His band are plunging in the bay,
Their sabres glitter through the spray;
Wet — wild — unwearied to the strand
They struggle — now they touch the land!
They come — ’t is but to add to slaughter —
His heart’s best blood is on the water.

XXV

Escaped from shot, unharm’d by steel,
Or scarcely grazed its force to feel,
Had Selim won, betray’d, beset,
To where the strand and billows met;
There as his last step left the land,
And the last death-blow dealt his hand —
Ah! wherefore did he turn to look
For her his eye but sought in vain?
That pause, that fatal gaze he took,
Hath doom’d his death, or fix’d his chain.
Sad proof, in peril and in pain,
How late will Lover’s hope remain
His back was to the dashing spray;
Behind, but close, his comrades lay,
When, at the instant, hiss’d the ball —
‘So may the foes of Giaffir fall!’
Whose voice is heard? whose carbine rang?
Whose bullet through the night-air sang,
Too nearly, deadly aim’d to err?
’T is thine — Abdallah’s Murderer!
The father slowly rued thy hate,
The son hath found a quicker fate:
Fast from his breast the blood is bubbling,
The whiteness of the sea-foam troubling, —
If aught his lips essay’d to groan,
The rushing billows choked the tone!

XXVI

Morn slowly rolls the clouds away;
Few trophies of the fight are there:
The shouts that shook the midnight-bay
Are silent; but some signs of fray
That strand of strife may bear,
And fragments of each shiver’d brand;
Steps stamp’d; and dash’d into the sand
The print of many a struggling hand
May there be mark’d; nor far remote
A broken torch, an oarless boat;
And tangled on the weeds that heap
The beach where shelving to the deep
There lies a white capote!
’T is rent in twain — one dark-red stain
The wave yet ripples o’er in vain:
But where is he who wore?
Ye, who would o’er his relics weep,
Go, seek them where the surges sweep
Their burthen round Sigæum’s steep
And cast on Lemnos’ shore.
The sea-birds shriek above the prey,
O’er which their hungry beaks delay,
As shaken on his restless pillow,
His head heaves with the heaving billow;
That hand, whose motion is not life,
Yet feebly seems to menace strife,
Flung by the tossing tide on high,
Then levell’d with the wave —
What recks it, though that corse shall lie
Within a living grave?
The bird that tears that prostrate form
Hath only robb’d the meaner worm;
The only heart, the only eye
Had bled or wept to see him die,
Had seen those scatter’d limbs composed,
And mourn’d above his turban stone,
That heart hath burst — that eye was closed —
Yea — closed before his own!

XXVII

By Helle’s stream there is a voice of wail!
And woman’s eye is wet, man’s cheek is pale:
Zuleika! last of Giaffir’s race,
Thy destined lord is come too late:
He sees not — ne’er shall see thy face!
Can he not hear
The loud Wul-wulleh warn his distant ear?
Thy handmaids weeping at the gate,
The Koran-chanters of the hymn of fate
The silent slaves with folded arms that wait,
Sighs in the hall, and shrieks upon the gale,
Tell him thy tale!
Thou didst not view thy Selim fall!
That fearful moment when he left the cave
Thy heart grew chill:

He was thy hope — thy joy — thy love — thine all —
And that last thought on him thou couldst not save
Sufficed to kill;
Burst forth in one wild cry — and all was still.
Peace to thy broken heart and virgin grave!
Ah, happy! but of life to lose the worst!
That grief — though deep — though fatal — was thy first!
Thrice happy! ne'er to feel nor fear the force
Of absence, shame, pride, hate, revenge, remorse!
And, oh! that pang where more than Madness lies!
The worm that will not sleep — and never dies;
Thought of the gloomy day and ghastly night,
That dreads the darkness and yet loathes the light,
That winds around and tears the quivering heart!
Ah, wherefore not consume it — and depart! —
Woe to thee, rash and unrelenting chief!
Vainly thou heap'st the dust upon thy head,
Vainly the sackcloth o'er thy limbs dost spread:
By that same hand Abdallah — Selim bled.
Now let it tear thy beard in idle grief:
Thy pride of heart, thy bride for Osman's bed,
She, whom thy sultan had but seen to wed,
Thy Daughter 's dead!
Hope of thine age, thy twilight's lonely beam,
The Star hath set that shone on Helle's stream.
What quench'd its ray? — the blood that thou hast shed!
Hark! to the hurried question of Despair:
'Where is my child?' an Echo answers — 'Where?'

XXVIII

Within the place of thousand tombs
That shine beneath, while dark above
The sad but living cypress glooms,
And withers not though branch and leaf
Are stamp'd with an eternal grief
Like early unrequited Love,
One spot exists, which ever blooms,
Ev'n in that deadly grove —
A single rose is shedding there
Its lonely lustre, meek and pale:
It looks as planted by Despair —
So white — so faint — the slightest gale
Might whirl the leaves on high;
And yet, though storms and blight assail,
And hands more rude than wintry sky
May wring it from the stem — in vain —
To-morrow sees it bloom again!
The stalk some spirit gently rears,
And waters with celestial tears;
For well may maids of Helle deem
That this can be no earthly flower,
Which mocks the tempest's withering hour,
And buds unshelter'd by a bower;
Nor droops, though spring refuse her shower,
Nor woos the summer beam.
To it the livelong night there sings
A bird unseen — but not remote:
Invisible his airy wings,
But soft as harp that Houri strings
His long entrancing note!
It were the Bulbul; but his throat,
Though mournful, pours not such a strain;
For they who listen cannot leave
The spot, but linger there and grieve,
As if they loved in vain!
And yet so sweet the tears they shed,
'T is sorrow so unmix'd with dread,
They scarce can bear the morn to break
That melancholy spell,
And longer yet would weep and wake,
He sings so wild and well!
But when the day-blush bursts from high,
Expires that magic melody.
And some have been who could believe
(So fondly youthful dreams deceive,
Yet harsh be they that blame)
That note so piercing and profound
Will shape and syllable its sound
Into Zuleika's name.
'T is from her cypress summit heard,
That melts in air the liquid word:
'T is from her lowly virgin earth
That white rose takes its tender birth.

There late was laid a marble stone;
Eve saw it placed — the Morrow gone!
It was no mortal arm that bore
That deep-fix'd pillar to the shore;
For there, as Helle's legends tell,
Next morn 't was found where Selim fell;
Lash'd by the tumbling tide, whose wave
Denied his bones a holier grave.
And there by night, reclined, 't is said,
Is seen a ghastly turban'd head:
And hence extended by the billow,
'T is named the 'Pirate-phantom's pillow!'
Where first it lay that mourning flower
Hath flourish'd; flourisheth this hour,
Alone and dewy, coldly pure and pale;
As weeping Beauty's cheek at Sorrow's tale!

THE CORSAIR

A TALE

—I suoi pensieri in lui dormir non ponno.
Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, canto x. [stanza 78].

TO THOMAS MOORE, ESQ.

My dear Moore,

I dedicate to you the last production with which I shall trespass on public patience, and your indulgence, for some years; and I own that I feel anxious to avail myself of this latest and only opportunity of adorning my pages with a name, consecrated by unshaken public principle, and the most undoubted and various talents. While Ireland ranks you among the firmest of her patriots; while you stand alone the first of her bards in her estimation, and Britain repeats and ratifies the decree, permit one, whose only regret, since our first acquaintance, has been the years he had lost before it commenced, to add the humble but sincere suffrage of friendship, to the voice of more than one nation. It will at least prove to you, that I have neither forgotten the gratification derived from your society, nor abandoned the prospect of its renewal, whenever your leisure or inclination allows you to atone to your friends for too long an absence. It is said among those friends, I trust truly, that you are engaged in the composition of a poem whose scene will be laid in the East; none can do those scenes so much justice. The wrongs of your own country, the magnificent and fiery spirit of her sons, the beauty and feeling of her daughters, may there be found; and Collins, when he denominated his Oriental his Irish Eclogues, was not aware how true, at least, was a part of his parallel. Your imagination will create a warmer sun, and less clouded sky; but wildness, tenderness, and originality, are part of your national claim of Oriental descent, to which you have already thus far proved your title more clearly than the most zealous of your country's antiquarians.

May I add a few words on a subject on which all men are supposed to be fluent, and none agreeable, — Self? I have written much, and published more than enough to demand a longer silence than I now meditate; but, for some years to come, it is my intention to tempt no further the award of 'Gods, men, nor columns.' In the present composition I have attempted not the most difficult, but, perhaps, the best adapted measure to our language, the good old and now neglected heroic couplet. The stanza of Spenser is perhaps too slow and dignified for narrative; though, I confess, it is the measure most after my own heart: Scott alone, of the present generation, has hitherto completely triumphed over the fatal facility of the octo-syllabic verse; and this is not the least victory of his fertile and mighty genius: in blank verse, Milton, Thomson, and our dramatists, are the beacons that shine along the deep, but warn us from the rough and barren rock on which they are kindled. The heroic couplet is not the most popular measure certainly; but as I did not deviate into the other from a wish to flatter what is called public opinion, I shall quit it without further apology, and take my chance once more with that versification, in which I have hitherto published nothing but compositions whose former circulation is part of my present, and will be of my future regret.

With regard to my story, and stories in general, I should have been glad to have rendered my personages more perfect and amiable, if possible, inasmuch as I have been sometimes criticised, and considered no less responsible for their deeds and qualities than if all had been personal. Be it so — if I have deviated into the gloomy vanity of 'drawing from self,' the pictures are probably like, since they are unfavourable; and if not, those who know me are undeceived, and those who do not, I have little interest in undeceiving. I have no particular desire that any but my acquaintance should think the author better than the beings of his imagining; but I cannot help a little surprise, and perhaps amusement, at some odd critical exceptions in the present instance, when I see several bards (far more deserving, I allow) in very reputable plight, and quite exempted from all participation in the faults of those heroes, who, nevertheless, might be found with little more morality than the Giaour, and perhaps — but no — I must admit Childe Harold to be a very repulsive personage; and as to his identity, those who like it must give him whatever 'alias' they please.

If, however, it were worth while to remove the impression, it might be of some service to me, that the man who is alike the delight of his readers and his friends, the poet of all circles, and the idol of his own, permits me here and elsewhere to subscribe myself,

Most truly,
And affectionately,
His obedient servant,
Byron.

January 2, 1814.

CANTO THE FIRST

—— nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria, —
Dante. [*Inferno*, v. 121.]

I

'O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
Our thoughts as boundless and our souls as free,
Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
Survey our empire and behold our home!
These are our realms, no limits to their sway —
Our flag the sceptre all who meet obey.
Ours the wild life in tumult still to range
From toil to rest, and joy in every change.
Oh, who can tell? not thou, luxurious slave,
Whose soul would sicken o'er the heaving wave;
Not thou, vain lord of wantonness and ease,
Whom slumber soothes not, pleasure cannot please.
Oh, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide,
The exulting sense, the pulse's maddening play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way?
That for itself can woo the approaching fight,
And turn what some deem danger to delight;
That seeks what cravens shun with more than zeal,
And where the feebler faint, can only feel —
Feel — to the rising bosom's inmost core,
Its hope awaken and its spirit soar?
No dread of death — if with us die our foes —
Save that it seems even duller than repose:
Come when it will — we snatch the life of life —
When lost — what recks it by disease or strife?
Let him who crawls enamour'd of decay,
Cling to his couch and sicken years away;
Heave his thick breath and shake his palsied head;
Ours the fresh turf and not the feverish bed.
While gasp by gasp he falters forth his soul,
Ours with one pang — one bound — escapes control.
His corse may boast its urn and narrow cave,
And they who loathed his life may gild his grave:
Ours are the tears, though few, sincerely shed,
When Ocean shrouds and sepulchres our dead.
For us, even banquets fond regret supply
In the red cup that crowns our memory;
And the brief epitaph in danger's day,
When those who win at length divide the prey,
And cry, Remembrance saddening o'er each brow,
How had the brave who fell exulted *now!*'

II

Such were the notes that from the Pirate's isle
Around the kindling watch-fire rang the while:
Such were the sounds that thrill'd the rocks along,
And unto ears as rugged seem'd a song!
In scatter'd groups upon the golden sand,
They game — carouse — converse — or whet the brand;
Select the arms — to each his blade assign,
And careless eye the blood that dims its shine;
Repair the boat, replace the helm or oar,
While others straggling muse along the shore;
For the wild-bird the busy springes set,
Or spread beneath the sun the dripping net;

Gaze where some distant sail a speck supplies,
With all the thirsting eye of Enterprise;
Tell o'er the tales of many a night of toil,
And marvel where they next shall seize a spoil:
No matter where — their chief's allotment this;
Theirs, to believe no prey nor plan amiss.
But who that Chief? his name on every shore
Is famed and fear'd — they ask and know no more.
With these he mingles not but to command;
Few are his words, but keen his eye and hand.
Ne'er seasons he with mirth their jovial mess,
But they forgive his silence for success.
Ne'er for his lip the purpling cup they fill,
That goblet passes him untasted still;
And for his fare — the rudest of his crew
Would that, in turn, have pass'd untasted too;
Earth's coarsest bread, the garden's homeliest roots,
And scarce the summer luxury of fruits,
His short repast in humbleness supply
With all a hermit's board would scarce deny.
But while he shuns the grosser joys of sense,
His mind seems nourish'd by that abstinence.
'Steer to that shore!' — they sail. 'Do this!' — 't is done:
'Now form and follow me!' — the spoil is won.
Thus prompt his accents and his actions still,
And all obey and few inquire his will;
To such, brief answer and contemptuous eye
Convey reproof, nor further deign reply.

III

'A sail! — a sail!' — a promised prize to Hope!
Her nation — flag — how speaks the telescope?
No prize, alas! — but yet a welcome sail:
The blood-red signal glitters in the gale.
Yes — she is ours — a home-returning bark —
Blow fair, thou breeze! — she anchors ere the dark.
Already doubled is the cape — our bay
Receives that prow which proudly spurns the spray.
How gloriously her gallant course she goes!
Her white wings flying — never from her foes —
She walks the waters like a thing of life,
And seems to dare the elements to strife.
Who would not brave the battle-fire, the wreck,
To move the monarch of her peopled deck?

IV

Hoarse o'er her side the rustling cable rings;
The sails are furl'd; and anchoring round she swings:
And gathering loiterers on the land discern
Her boat descending from the latticed stern.
'T is mann'd; the oars keep concert to the strand,
Till grates her keel upon the shallow sand.
Hail to the welcome shout! — the friendly speech!
When hand grasps hand uniting on the beach;
The smile, the question, and the quick reply,
And the heart's promise of festivity!

V

The tidings spread, and gathering grows the crowd:
The hum of voices, and the laughter loud,
And woman's gentler anxious tone is heard —
Friends', husbands', lovers' names in each dear word:
'Oh! are they safe? we ask not of success —
But shall we see them? will their accents bless?
From where the battle roars, the billows chafe,
They doubtless boldly did — but who are safe?
Here let them haste to gladden and surprise,
And kiss the doubt from these delighted eyes!'

VI

'Where is our chief? for him we bear report—
And doubt that joy, which hails our coming, short;
Yet thus sincere—'t is cheering, though so brief;
But, Juan! instant guide us to our chief:
Our greeting paid, we 'll feast on our return,
And all shall hear what each may wish to learn.'
Ascending slowly by the rock-hewn way,
To where his watch-tower beetles o'er the bay,
By bushy brake, and wild flowers blossoming,
And freshness breathing from each silver spring,
Whose scatter'd streams from granite basins burst,
Leap into life, and sparkling woo your thirst—
From crag to cliff they mount.—Near yonder cave,
What lonely straggler looks along the wave?
In pensive posture leaning on the brand,
Not oft a resting-staff to that red hand?
''T is he—'t is Conrad; here—as wont—alone;
On—Juan!—on—and make our purpose known.
The bark he views, and tell him we would greet
His ear with tidings he must quickly meet:
We dare not yet approach—thou know'st his mood,
When strange or uninvited steps intrude.'

VII

Him Juan sought, and told of their intent;—
He spake not, but a sign express'd assent.
These Juan calls—they come—to their salute
He bends him slightly, but his lips are mute.
'These letters, Chief, are from the Greek—the spy,
Who still proclaims our spoil or peril nigh:
Whate'er his tidings, we can well report,
Much that'—'Peace, peace!' he cuts their prating short.
Wondering they turn, abash'd, while each to each,
Conjecture whispers in his muttering speech:
They watch his glance with many a stealing look,
To gather how that eye the tidings took;
But, this as if he guess'd, with head aside,
Perchance from some emotion, doubt, or pride,
He read the scroll.—'My tablets, Juan, hark—
Where is Gonsalvo?'
'In the anchor'd bark.'
'There let him stay—to him this order bear—
Back to your duty—for my course prepare:
Myself this enterprise to-night will share.'
'To-night, Lord Conrad?'
'Ay! at set of sun:
The breeze will freshen when the day is done.
My corslet—cloak—one hour—and we are gone.
Sling on thy bugle—see that free from rust
My carbine-lock springs worthy of my trust;
Be the edge sharpen'd of my boarding-brand,
And give its guard more room to fit my hand.
This let the Armourer with speed dispose;
Last time, it more fatigued my arm than foes:
Mark that the signal-gun be duly fired,
To tell us when the hour of stay 's expired.'

VIII

They make obeisance and retire in haste,
Too soon to seek again the watery waste:
Yet they repine not—so that Conrad guides;
And who dare question aught that he decides?
That man of loneliness and mystery,—
Scarce seen to smile and seldom heard to sigh;
Whose name appals the fiercest of his crew,
And tints each swarthy cheek with sallower hue,—
Still sways their souls with that commanding art
That dazzles, leads, yet chills the vulgar heart.

What is that spell, that thus his lawless train
Confess and envy, yet oppose in vain?
What should it be that thus their faith can bind?
The power of Thought — the magic of the Mind!
Link'd with success, assumed and kept with skill,
That moulds another's weakness to its will;
Wields with their hands, but, still to these unknown,
Makes even their mightiest deeds appear his own.
Such hath it been — shall be — beneath the sun
The many still must labour for the one!
'T is Nature's doom — but let the wretch who toils
Accuse not, hate not *him* who wears the spoils.
Oh! if he knew the weight of splendid chains,
How light the balance of his humbler pains!

IX

Unlike the heroes of each ancient race,
Demons in act but Gods at least in face,
In Conrad's form seems little to admire,
Though his dark eyebrow shades a glance of fire:
Robust but not Herculean — to the sight
No giant frame sets forth his common height;
Yet, in the whole, who paused to look again,
Saw more than marks the crowd of vulgar men;
They gaze and marvel how — and still confess
That thus it is, but why they cannot guess.
Sunburnt his cheek, his forehead high and pale
The sable curls in wild profusion veil;
And oft perforce his rising lip reveals
The haughtier thought it curbs, but scarce conceals.
Though smooth his voice and calm his general mien,
Still seems there something he would not have seen:
His features' deepening lines and varying hue
At times attracted, yet perplex'd the view,
As if within that murkiness of mind
Work'd feelings fearful and yet undefined;
Such might it be — that none could truly tell —
Too close inquiry his stern glance would quell.
There breathe but few whose aspect might defy
The full encounter of his searching eye:
He had the skill, when Cunning's gaze would seek
To probe his heart and watch his changing cheek,
At once the observer's purpose to espy,
And on himself roll back his scrutiny,
Lest he to Conrad rather should betray
Some secret thought, than drag that chief's to day.
There was a laughing devil in his sneer,
That raised emotions both of rage and fear;
And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
Hope withering fled — and Mercy sigh'd farewell!

X

Slight are the outward signs of evil thought,
Within — within — 't was there the spirit wrought!
Love shows all changes — Hate, Ambition, Guile,
Betray no further than the bitter smile;
The lip's least curl, the lightest paleness thrown
Along the govern'd aspect, speak alone
Of deeper passions; and to judge their mien,
He, who would see, must be himself unseen.
Then — with the hurried tread, the upward eye,
The clenchèd hand, the pause of agony,
That listens, starting, lest the step too near
Approach intrusive on that mood of fear:
Then — with each feature working from the heart,
With feelings loosed to strengthen — not depart,
That rise — convulse — contend — that freeze or glow,
Flush in the cheek, or damp upon the brow;
Then — Stranger! if thou canst and tremblest not,
Behold his soul, the rest that soothes his lot!
Mark how that lone and blighted bosom sears
The scathing thought of execrated years!
Behold — but who hath seen, or e'er shall see,
Man as himself, the secret spirit free?

XI

Yet was not Conrad thus by Nature sent
To lead the guilty — guilt's worst instrument;
His soul was changed, before his deeds had driven
Him forth to war with man and forfeit heaven.
Warp'd by the world in Disappointment's school,
In words too wise, in conduct *there* a fool;
Too firm to yield, and far too proud to stoop,
Doom'd by his very virtues for a dupe,
He cursed those virtues as the cause of ill,
And not the traitors who betray'd him still;
Nor deem'd that gifts bestow'd on better men
Had left him joy, and means to give again.
Fear'd, shunn'd, belied, ere youth had lost her force,
He hated man too much to feel remorse,
And thought the voice of wrath a sacred call
To pay the injuries of some on all.
He knew himself a villain, but he deem'd
The rest no better than the thing he seem'd;
And scorn'd the best as hypocrites who hid
Those deeds the bolder spirit plainly did.
He knew himself detested, but he knew
The hearts that loathed him, crouch'd and dreaded too.
Lone, wild, and strange, he stood alike exempt
From all affection and from all contempt:
His name could sadden and his acts surprise,
But they that fear'd him dared not to despise.
Man spurns the worm, but pauses ere he wake
The slumbering venom of the folded snake:
The first may turn, but not avenge the blow;
The last expires, but leaves no living foe;
Fast to the doom'd offender's form it clings,
And he may crush — not conquer — still it stings!

XII

None are all evil: quickening round his heart,
One softer feeling would not yet depart.
Oft could he sneer at others as beguiled
By passions worthy of a fool or child;
Yet 'gainst that passion vainly still he strove,
And even in him it asks the name of Love!
Yes, it was love — unchangeable — unchanged,
Felt but for one from whom he never ranged;
Though fairest captives daily met his eye,
He shunn'd, nor sought, but coldly pass'd them by;
Though many a beauty droop'd in prison'd bower,
None ever soothed his most unguarded hour.
Yes — it was Love; if thoughts of tenderness,
Tried in temptation, strengthen'd by distress,
Unmoved by absence, firm in every clime,
And yet — Oh more than all! — untired by time;
Which nor defeated hope, nor baffled wile,
Could render sullen were she near to smile,
Nor rage could fire, nor sickness fret to vent
On her one murmur of his discontent;
Which still would meet with joy, with calmness part,
Lest that his look of grief should reach her heart;
Which nought removed, nor menaced to remove; —
If there be love in mortals — this was love!
He was a villain — ay — reproaches shower
On him — but not the passion, nor its power,
Which only proved, all other virtues gone,
Not guilt itself could quench this loveliest one!

XIII

He paused a moment, till his hastening men
Pass'd the first winding downward to the glen.
'Strange tidings! — many a peril have I pass'd,
Nor know I why this next appears the last!
Yet so my heart forebodes, but must not fear,
Nor shall my followers find me falter here.
'T is rash to meet, but surer death to wait
Till here they hunt us to undoubted fate;
And, if my plan but hold and Fortune smile,
We 'll furnish mourners for our funeral pile.
Ay, let them slumber, peaceful be their dreams!
Morn ne'er awoke them with such brilliant beams
As kindle high to-night (but blow, thou breeze!)
To warm these slow avengers of the seas.

Now to Medora — Oh! my sinking heart,
Long may her own be lighter than thou art!
Yet was I brave — mean boast where all are brave!
Ev'n insects sting for aught they seek to save.
This common courage which with brutes we share,
That owes its deadliest efforts to despair,
Small merit claims; but 't was my nobler hope
To teach my few with numbers still to cope.
Long have I led them — not to vainly bleed;
No medium now — we perish or succeed!
So let it be — it irks not me to die;
But thus to urge them whence they cannot fly.
My lot hath long had little of my care,
But chafes my pride thus baffled in the snare:
Is this my skill? my craft? to set at last
Hope, power, and life upon a single cast?
Oh, Fate! — accuse thy folly, not thy fate —
She may redeem thee still — nor yet too late.'

XIV

Thus with himself communion held he, till
He reach'd the summit of his tower-crown'd hill:
There at the portal paused — for wild and soft
He heard those accents never heard too oft.
Through the high lattice far yet sweet they rung,
And these the notes the bird of beauty sung:

1

'Deep in my soul that tender secret dwells,
  Lonely and lost to light for evermore,
Save when to thine my heart responsive swells,
  Then trembles into silence as before.

2

'There, in its centre, a sepulchral lamp
  Burns the slow flame, eternal — but unseen;
Which not the darkness of despair can damp,
  Though vain its ray as it had never been.

3

'Remember me — Oh! pass not thou my grave
  Without one thought whose relics there recline:
The only pang my bosom dare not brave
  Must be to find forgetfulness in thine.

4

'My fondest, faintest, latest accents hear —
  Grief for the dead not Virtue can reprove;
Then give me all I ever ask'd — a tear,
  The first — last — sole reward of so much love.'

He pass'd the portal, cross'd the corridore,
And reach'd the chamber as the strain gave o'er:
'My own Medora! sure thy song is sad —'

'In Conrad's absence wouldst thou have it glad?
Without thine ear to listen to my lay,
Still must my song my thoughts, my soul betray:
Still must each accent to my bosom suit,
My heart unhush'd — although my lips were mute!
Oh! many a night on this lone couch reclined,
My dreaming fear with storms hath wing'd the wind,
And deem'd the breath that faintly fann'd thy sail
The murmuring prelude of the ruder gale;
Though soft, it seem'd the low prophetic dirge,
That mourn'd thee floating on the savage surge.
Still would I rise to rouse the beacon fire,
Lest spies less true should let the blaze expire;
And many a restless hour outwatch'd each star,
And morning came — and still thou wert afar.
Oh! how the chill blast on my bosom blew,
And day broke dreary on my troubled view,
And still I gazed and gazed — and not a prow
Was granted to my tears — my truth — my vow!
At length — 't was noon — I hail'd and blest the mast
That met my sight — it near'd — Alas! it pass'd!
Another came — Oh God! 't was thine at last!
Would that those days were over! wilt thou ne'er,
My Conrad! learn the joys of peace to share?

Sure thou hast more than wealth, and many a home
As bright as this invites us not to roam.
Thou know'st it is not peril that I fear,
I only tremble when thou art not here;
Then not for mine, but that far dearer life,
Which flies from love and languishes for strife —
How strange that heart, to me so tender still,
Should war with nature and its better will!'

'Yea, strange indeed — that heart hath long been changed;
Worm-like 't was trampled, adder-like avenged,
Without one hope on earth beyond thy love,
And scarce a glimpse of mercy from above.
Yet the same feeling which thou dost condemn,
My very love to thee is hate to them,
So closely mingling here, that disentwined
I cease to love thee when I love mankind!
Yet dread not this; the proof of all the past
Assures the future that my love will last:
But — Oh, Medora! nerve thy gentler heart,
This hour again — but not for long — we part.'

'This hour we part! — my heart foreboded this:
Thus ever fade my fairy dreams of bliss.
This hour — it cannot be — this hour away!
Yon bark hath hardly anchor'd in the bay;
Her consort still is absent, and her crew
Have need of rest before they toil anew.
My love! thou mock'st my weakness, and wouldst steel
My breast before the time when it must feel;
But trifle now no more with my distress,
Such mirth hath less of play than bitterness.
Be silent, Conrad! — dearest! come and share
The feast these hands delighted to prepare;
Light toil! to cull and dress thy frugal fare!
See, I have pluck'd the fruit that promised best,
And where not sure, perplex'd, but pleased, I guess'd
At such as seem'd the fairest; thrice the hill
My steps have wound to try the coolest rill;
Yes! thy sherbet to-night will sweetly flow,
See how it sparkles in its vase of snow!
The grapes' gay juice thy bosom never cheers;
Thou more than Moslem when the cup appears!
Think not I mean to chide, for I rejoice
What others deem a penance is thy choice.
But come, the board is spread; our silver lamp
Is trimm'd and heeds not the sirocco's damp.
Then shall my handmaids while the time along,
And join with me the dance, or wake the song;
Or my guitar, which still thou lov'st to hear,
Shall soothe or lull — or, should it vex thine ear,
We 'll turn the tale, by Ariosto told,
Of fair Olympia loved and left of old.
Why — thou wert worse than he who broke his vow
To that lost damsel, shouldst thou leave me now;
Or even that traitor chief — I 've seen thee smile,
When the clear sky show'd Ariadne's Isle,
Which I have pointed from these cliffs the while:
And thus, half sportive, half in fear, I said,
Lest Time should raise that doubt to more than dread,
Thus Conrad, too, will quit me for the main:
And he deceived me — for — he came again!'

'Again — again — and oft again — my love!
If there be life below, and hope above,
He will return; but now, the moments bring
The time of parting with redoubled wing.
The why, the where — what boots it now to tell?
Since all must end in that wild word, farewell!
Yet would I fain, did time allow, disclose —
Fear not — these are no formidable foes;
And here shall watch a more than wonted guard,
For sudden siege and long defence prepared.
Nor be thou lonely; though thy lord 's away,
Our matrons and thy handmaids with thee stay:
And this thy comfort, that, when next we meet,
Security shall make repose more sweet.

List ! — 't is the bugle — Juan shrilly blew —
One kiss — one more — another — Oh ! Adieu ! '

She rose, she sprung, she clung to his embrace,
Till his heart heaved beneath her hidden face.
He dared not raise to his that deep-blue eye,
Which downcast droop'd in tearless agony.
Her long fair hair lay floating o'er his arms,
In all the wildness of dishevell'd charms;
Scarce beat that bosom where his image dwelt,
So full — *that* feeling seem'd almost unfelt !
Hark — peals the thunder of the signal-gun !
It told 't was sunset — and he cursed that sun.
Again — again — that form he madly press'd,
Which mutely clasp'd, imploringly caress'd !
And tottering to the couch his bride he bore,
One moment gazed — as if to gaze no more;
Felt — that for him earth held but her alone,
Kiss'd her cold forehead — turn'd — is Conrad gone ?

XV

' And is he gone ? ' — on sudden solitude
How oft that fearful question will intrude !
' 'T was but an instant past — and here he stood !
And now ' — without the portal's porch she rush'd,
And then at length her tears in freedom gush'd;
Big, bright, and fast, unknown to her they fell;
But still her lips refused to send — ' Farewell ! '
For in that word, that fatal word — howe'er
We promise, hope, believe — there breathes despair.
O'er every feature of that still, pale face,
Had sorrow fix'd what time can ne'er erase:
The tender blue of that large loving eye
Grew frozen with its gaze on vacancy,
Till — Oh, how far ! — it caught a glimpse of him,
And then it flow'd, and phrensied seem'd to swim
Through those long, dark, and glistening lashes dew'd
With drops of sadness oft to be renew'd.
' He 's gone ! ' — against her heart that hand is driven,
Convulsed and quick, then gently raised to heaven.
She look'd and saw the heaving of the main;
The white sail set — she dared not look again;
But turn'd with sickening soul within the gate —
' It is no dream — and I am desolate ! '

XVI

From crag to crag descending, swiftly sped
Stern Conrad down, nor once he turn'd his head;
But shrunk whene'er the windings of his way
Forced on his eye what he would not survey,
His lone but lovely dwelling on the steep,
That hail'd him first when homeward from the deep:
And she — the dim and melancholy star,
Whose ray of beauty reach'd him from afar,
On her he must not gaze, he must not think;
There he might rest — but on Destruction's brink.
Yet once almost he stopp'd — and nearly gave
His fate to chance, his projects to the wave:
But no — it must not be — a worthy chief
May melt, but not betray to woman's grief.
He sees his bark, he notes how fair the wind,
And sternly gathers all his might of mind.
Again he hurries on — and as he hears
The clang of tumult vibrate on his ears,
The busy sounds, the bustle of the shore,
The shout, the signal, and the dashing oar,
As marks his eye the seaboy on the mast,
The anchors rise, the sails unfurling fast,
The waving kerchiefs of the crowd that urge
That mute adieu to those who stem the surge;
And more than all, his blood-red flag aloft, —
He marvell'd how his heart could seem so soft.

Fire in his glance, and wildness in his breast,
He feels of all his former self possest;
He bounds, he flies, until his footsteps reach
The verge where ends the cliff, begins the beach;
There checks his speed, but pauses, less to breathe
The breezy freshness of the deep beneath,
Than there his wonted statelier step renew;
Nor rush, disturb'd by haste, to vulgar view:
For well had Conrad learn'd to curb the crowd,
By arts that veil and oft preserve the proud.
His was the lofty port, the distant mien,
That seems to shun the sight, and awes if seen;
The solemn aspect, and the high-born eye,
That checks low mirth but lacks not courtesy:
All these he wielded to command assent.
But where he wish'd to win, so well unbent,
That kindness cancell'd fear in those who heard,
And others' gifts show'd mean beside his word,
When echo'd to the heart as from his own
His deep yet tender melody of tone:
But such was foreign to his wonted mood,
He cared not what he soften'd, but subdued;
The evil passions of his youth had made
Him value less who loved than what obey'd.

XVII

Around him mustering ranged his ready guard.
Before him Juan stands — 'Are all prepared?'
'They are — nay more, embark'd; the latest boat
Waits but my chief —'
'My sword, and my capote.'
Soon firmly girded on and lightly slung,
His belt and cloak were o'er his shoulders flung.
'Call Pedro here!' He comes, and Conrad bends
With all the courtesy he deign'd his friends:
'Receive these tablets and peruse with care,
Words of high trust and truth are graven there;
Double the guard, and when Anselmo's bark
Arrives, let him alike these orders mark:
In three days (serve the breeze) the sun shall shine
On our return — till then all peace be thine!'
This said, his brother Pirate's hand he wrung,
Then to his boat with haughty gesture sprung.
Flash'd the dipt oars, and, sparkling with the stroke,
Around the waves' phosphoric brightness broke;
They gain the vessel, on the deck he stands;
Shrieks the shrill whistle — ply the busy hands.
He marks how well the ship her helm obeys,
How gallant all her crew, and deigns to praise.
His eyes of pride to young Gonsalvo turn —
Why doth he start and inly seem to mourn?
Alas! those eyes beheld his rocky tower,
And live a moment o'er the parting hour;
She, his Medora, did she mark the prow?
Ah! never loved he half so much as now!
But much must yet be done ere dawn of day —
Again he mans himself and turns away;
Down to the cabin with Gonsalvo bends,
And there unfolds his plan, his means, and ends.
Before them burns the lamp, and spreads the chart,
And all that speaks and aids the naval art;
They to the midnight watch protract debate;
To anxious eyes what hour is ever late?
Meantime, the steady breeze serenely blew,
And fast and falcon-like the vessel flew;
Pass'd the high headlands of each clustering isle
To gain their port — long — long ere morning smile:
And soon the night-glass through the narrow bay
Discovers where the Pacha's galleys lay.
Count they each sail, and mark how there supine
The lights in vain o'er heedless Moslem shine.

Secure, unnoted, Conrad's prow pass'd by,
And anchor'd where his ambush meant to lie;
Screen'd from espial by the jutting cape,
That rears on high its rude fantastic shape.
Then rose his band to duty — not from sleep —
Equipp'd for deeds alike on land or deep;
While lean'd their leader o'er the fretting flood,
And calmly talk'd — and yet he talk'd of blood!

CANTO THE SECOND

Conosceste i dubbiosi desiri?
Dante. [*Inferno*, v. 120.]

I

In Coron's bay floats many a galley light,
Through Coron's lattices the lamps are bright,
For Seyd, the Pacha, makes a feast to-night:
A feast for promised triumph yet to come,
When he shall drag the fetter'd Rovers home.
This hath he sworn by Alla and his sword;
And faithful to his firman and his word,
His summon'd prows collect along the coast,
And great the gathering crews, and loud the boast.
Already shared the captives and the prize,
Though far the distant foe they thus despise;
'T is but to sail — no doubt to-morrow's Sun
Will see the Pirates bound — their haven won!
Meantime the watch may slumber, if they will,
Nor only wake to war, but dreaming kill.
Though all, who can, disperse on shore and seek
To flesh their glowing valour on the Greek;
How well such deed becomes the turban'd brave,
To bare the sabre's edge before a slave,
Infest his dwelling, but forbear to slay —
Their arms are strong, yet merciful to-day,
And do not deign to smite because they may!
Unless some gay caprice suggests the blow,
To keep in practice for the coming foe.
Revel and rout the evening hours beguile,
And they who wish to wear a head must smile;
For Moslem mouths produce their choicest cheer,
And hoard their curses, till the coast is clear.

II

High in his hall reclines the turban'd Seyd;
Around, the bearded chiefs he came to lead.
Removed the banquet, and the last pilaff —
Forbidden draughts, 't is said, he dared to quaff,
Though to the rest the sober berry's juice
The slaves bear round for rigid Moslems' use;
The long chibouque's dissolving cloud supply,
While dance the Almas to wild minstrelsy.
The rising morn will view the chiefs embark,
But waves are somewhat treacherous in the dark;
And revellers may more securely sleep
On silken couch than o'er the rugged deep;
Feast there who can, nor combat till they must,
And less to conquest than to Korans trust;
And yet the numbers crowded in his host
Might warrant more than even the Pacha's boast.

III

With cautious reverence from the outer gate
Slow stalks the slave, whose office there to wait,
Bows his bent head; his hand salutes the floor,
Ere yet his tongue the trusted tidings bore:
'A captive Dervise, from the pirate's nest
Escaped, is here — himself would tell the rest.'
He took the sign from Seyd's assenting eye,
And led the holy man in silence nigh.
His arms were folded on his dark-green vest,
His step was feeble, and his look deprest;
Yet worn he seem'd of hardship more than years,
And pale his cheek with penance, not from fears.

Vow'd to his God — his sable locks he wore,
And these his lofty cap rose proudly o'er:
Around his form his loose long robe was thrown,
And wrapt a breast bestow'd on heaven alone.
Submissive, yet with self-possession mann'd,
He calmly met the curious eyes that scann'd;
And question of his coming fain would seek,
Before the Pacha's will allow'd to speak.

IV

'Whence com'st thou, Dervise?'
'From the outlaw's den,
A fugitive —'
'Thy capture where and when?'
'From Scalanova's port to Scio's isle,
The Saick was bound; but Alla did not smile
Upon our course — the Moslem merchant's gains
The Rovers won: our limbs have worn their chains.
I had no death to fear, nor wealth to boast,
Beyond the wandering freedom which I lost;
At length a fisher's humble boat by night
Afforded hope, and offer'd chance of flight;
I seized the hour, and find my safety here —
With thee, most mighty Pacha! who can fear?'

'How speed the outlaws? stand they well prepared,
Their plunder'd wealth and robber's rock to guard?
Dream they of this our preparation, doom'd
To view with fire their scorpion nest consumed?'

'Pacha! the fetter'd captive's mourning eye,
That weeps for flight, but ill can play the spy;
I only heard the reckless waters roar,
Those waves that would not bear me from the shore;
I only mark'd the glorious sun and sky,
Too bright, too blue, for my captivity;
And felt that all which Freedom's bosom cheers
Must break my chain before it dried my tears.
This may'st thou judge, at least, from my escape,
They little deem of aught in peril's shape;
Else vainly had I pray'd or sought the chance
That leads me here — if eyed with vigilance:
The careless guard that did not see me fly,
May watch as idly when thy power is nigh.
Pacha! — my limbs are faint — and nature craves
Food for my hunger, rest from tossing waves:
Permit my absence — peace be with thee! Peace
With all around! — now grant repose — release.'

'Stay, Dervise! I have more to question — stay,
I do command thee — sit — dost hear? — obey!
More I must ask, and food the slaves shall bring;
Thou shalt not pine where all are banqueting.
The supper done, prepare thee to reply,
Clearly and full — I love not mystery.'

'T were vain to guess what shook the pious man,
Who look'd not lovingly on that Divan;
Nor show'd high relish for the banquet prest,
And less respect for every fellow guest.
'T was but a moment's peevish hectic pass'd
Along his cheek, and tranquillized as fast:
He sate him down in silence, and his look
Resumed the calmness which before forsook.
The feast was usher'd in, but sumptuous fare
He shunn'd as if some poison mingled there.
For one so long condemn'd to toil and fast,
Methinks he strangely spares the rich repast.

'What ails thee, Dervise? eat — dost thou suppose
This feast a Christian's? or my friends thy foes?
Why dost thou shun the salt? that sacred pledge,
Which, once partaken, blunts the sabre's edge,
Makes even contending tribes in peace unite,
And hated hosts seem brethren to the sight!'

'Salt seasons dainties, and my food is still
The humblest root, my drink the simplest rill;
And my stern vow and order's laws oppose
To break or mingle bread with friends or foes.
It may seem strange — if there be aught to dread,
That peril rests upon my single head.
But for thy sway — nay more, thy Sultan's throne —
I taste nor bread nor banquet — save alone;
Infringed our order's rule, the Prophet's rage
To Mecca's dome might bar my pilgrimage.'

'Well, as thou wilt — ascetic as thou art;
One question answer, then in peace depart.
How many? — Ha! it cannot sure be day?
What star — what sun is bursting on the bay?
It shines a lake of fire! — away — away!
Ho! treachery! my guards! my scimitar!
The galleys feed the flames — and I afar!
Accursèd Dervise! — these thy tidings — thou
Some villain spy — seize — cleave him — slay him now!'

Up rose the Dervise with that burst of light,
Nor less his change of form appall'd the sight:
Up rose that Dervise — not in saintly garb,
But like a warrior bounding on his barb,
Dash'd his high cap, and tore his robe away —
Shone his mail'd breast, and flash'd his sabre's ray!
His close but glittering casque, and sable plume,
More glittering eye, and black brow's sabler gloom,
Glared on the Moslems' eyes some Afrit sprite,
Whose demon death-blow left no hope for fight.
The wild confusion, and the swarthy glow
Of flames on high and torches from below;
The shriek of terror, and the mingling yell —
For swords began to clash and shouts to swell —
Flung o'er that spot of earth the air of hell!
Distracted, to and fro, the flying slaves
Behold but bloody shore and fiery waves;
Nought heeded they the Pacha's angry cry,
They seize that Dervise! — seize on Zatanai!
He saw their terror, check'd the first despair
That urged him but to stand and perish there, —
Since far too early and too well obey'd,
The flame was kindled ere the signal made, —
He saw their terror, from his baldric drew
His bugle — brief the blast — but shrilly blew.
'T is answer'd — 'Well ye speed, my gallant crew!
Why did I doubt their quickness of career?
And deem design had left me single here?'
Sweeps his long arm — that sabre's whirling sway
Sheds fast atonement for its first delay;
Completes his fury what their fear begun,
And makes the many basely quail to one.
The cloven turbans o'er the chamber spread,
And scarce an arm dare rise to guard its head:
Even Seyd, convulsed, o'erwhelm'd, with rage, surprise,
Retreats before him, though he still defies.
No craven he, and yet he dreads the blow,
So much Confusion magnifies his foe!
His blazing galleys still distract his sight,
He tore his beard, and foaming fled the fight;
For now the pirates pass'd the Haram gate,
And burst within — and it were death to wait;
Where wild Amazement shrieking — kneeling — throws
The sword aside — in vain — the blood o'erflows!
The Corsairs, pouring, haste to where within
Invited Conrad's bugle, and the din
Of groaning victims and wild cries for life
Proclaim'd how well he did the work of strife.
They shout to find him grim and lonely there,
A glutted tiger mangling in his lair!
But short their greeting, shorter his reply:
''T is well — but Seyd escapes — and he must die;

Much hath been done, but more remains to do;
Their galleys blaze — why not their city too?'

V

Quick at the word they seized him each a torch,
And fire the dome from minaret to porch.
A stern delight was fix'd in Conrad's eye,
But sudden sunk; for on his ear the cry
Of women struck, and like a deadly knell
Knock'd at that heart unmoved by battle's yell:
'Oh! burst the Haram — wrong not on your lives
One female form, remember *we* have wives.
On them such outrage Vengeance will repay;
Man is our foe, and such 't is ours to slay:
But still we spared, must spare the weaker prey.
Oh! I forgot — but Heaven will not forgive
If at my word the helpless cease to live.
Follow who will — I go — we yet have time
Our souls to lighten of at least a crime.'
He climbs the crackling stair, he bursts the door,
Nor feels his feet glow scorching with the floor;
His breath choked gasping with the volumed smoke,
But still from room to room his way he broke.
They search — they find — they save: with lusty arms
Each bears a prize of unregarded charms;
Calm their loud fears, sustain their sinking frames
With all the care defenceless beauty claims;
So well could Conrad tame their fiercest mood,
And check the very hands with gore imbrued.
But who is she whom Conrad's arms convey
From reeking pile and combat's wreck away?
Who but the love of him he dooms to bleed?
The Haram queen — but still the slave of Seyd!

VI

Brief time had Conrad now to greet Gulnare,
Few words to reassure the trembling fair;
For in that pause compassion snatch'd from war,
The foe before retiring, fast and far,
With wonder saw their footsteps unpursued,
First slowlier fled — then rallied — then withstood.
This Seyd perceives, then first perceives how few,
Compared with his, the Corsair's roving crew;
And blushes o'er his error, as he eyes
The ruin wrought by panic and surprise.
Alla il Alla! Vengeance swells the cry,
Shame mounts to rage that must atone or die!
And flame for flame and blood for blood must tell,
The tide of triumph ebbs that flow'd too well —
When wrath returns to renovated strife,
And those who fought for conquest strike for life.
Conrad beheld the danger, he beheld
His followers faint by freshening foes repell'd:
'One effort — one — to break the circling host!'
They form, unite, charge, waver — all is lost!
Within a narrower ring compress'd, beset,
Hopeless, not heartless, strive and struggle yet —
Ah! now they fight in firmest file no more,
Hemm'd in — cut off — cleft down — and trampled o'er;
But each strikes singly, silently, and home,
And sinks outwearied rather than o'ercome,
His last faint quittance rendering with his breath,
Till the blade glimmers in the grasp of death!

VII

But first, ere came the rallying host to blows,
And rank to rank and hand to hand oppose,
Gulnare and all her Haram handmaids, freed,
Safe in the dome of one who held their creed

By Conrad's mandate safely were bestow'd,
And dried those tears for life and fame that flow'd.
And when that dark-eyed lady, young Gulnare,
Recall'd those thoughts late wandering in despair,
Much did she marvel o'er the courtesy
That smooth'd his accents, soften'd in his eye:
'T was strange — *that* robber, thus with gore bedew'd,
Seem'd gentler then than Seyd in fondest mood.
The Pacha woo'd as if he deem'd the slave
Must seem delighted with the heart he gave;
The Corsair vow'd protection, soothed affright,
As if his homage were a woman's right.
'The wish is wrong — nay, worse for female, vain:
Yet much I long to view that chief again;
If but to thank for, what my fear forgot,
The life — my loving lord remember'd not!'

VIII

And him she saw, where thickest carnage spread,
But gather'd breathing from the happier dead;
Far from his band, and battling with a host
That deem right dearly won the field he lost,
Fell'd — bleeding — baffled of the death he sought,
And snatch'd to expiate all the ills he wrought;
Preserved to linger and to live in vain,
While Vengeance ponder'd o'er new plans of pain
And stanch'd the blood she saves to shed again —
But drop for drop, for Seyd's unglutted eye
Would doom him ever dying — ne'er to die!
Can this be he triumphant late she saw,
When his red hand's wild gesture waved, a law?
'T is he indeed, disarm'd but undeprest,
His sole regret the life he still possest;
His wounds too slight, though taken with that will
Which would have kiss'd the hand that then could kill.
Oh were there none, of all the many given,
To send his soul — he scarcely ask'd to heaven?
Must he alone of all retain his breath,
Who more than all had striven and struck for death?
He deeply felt — what mortal hearts must feel,
When thus reversed on faithless fortune's wheel,
For crimes committed, and the victor's threat
Of lingering tortures to repay the debt —
He deeply, darkly felt; but evil pride
That led to perpetrate, now serves to hide.
Still in his stern and self-collected mien
A conqueror's more than captive's air is seen,
Though faint with wasting toil and stiffening wound, —
But few that saw, so calmly gazed around:
Though the far shouting of the distant crowd,
Their tremors o'er, rose insolently loud,
The better warriors who beheld him near,
Insulted not the foe who taught them fear;
And the grim guards that to his durance led,
In silence eyed him with a secret dread.

IX

The Leech was sent — but not in mercy — there,
To note how much the life yet left could bear;
He found enough to load with heaviest chain,
And promise feeling for the wrench of pain.
To-morrow — yea, to-morrow's evening sun
Will sinking see impalement's pangs begun,
And rising with the wonted blush of morn
Behold how well or ill those pangs are borne.
Of torments this the longest and the worst,
Which adds all other agony to thirst
That day by day death still forbears to slake,
While famish'd vultures flit around the stake.
'Oh! water — water!' — smiling Hate denies
The victim's prayer, for if he drinks he dies.
This was his doom; — the Leech, the guard, were gone,
And left proud Conrad fetter'd and alone.

X

'Twere vain to paint to what his feelings grew —
It even were doubtful if their victim knew.
There is a war, a chaos of the mind,
When all its elements convulsed, combined,
Lie dark and jarring with perturbèd force,
And gnashing with impenitent Remorse;
That juggling fiend — who never spake before —
But cries 'I warn'd thee!' when the deed is o'er.
Vain voice! the spirit burning but unbent,
May writhe, rebel — the weak alone repent!
Even in that lonely hour when most it feels,
And, to itself, all — all that self reveals,
No single passion, and no ruling thought
That leaves the rest as once unseen, unsought;
But the wild prospect when the soul reviews, —
All rushing through their thousand avenues, —
Ambition's dreams expiring, love's regret,
Endanger'd glory, life itself beset;
The joy untasted, the contempt or hate
'Gainst those who fain would triumph in our fate;
The hopeless past, the hasting future driven
Too quickly on to guess if Hell or Heaven;
Deeds, thoughts, and words, perhaps remember'd not
So keenly till that hour, but ne'er forgot;
Things light or lovely in their acted time,
But now to stern Reflection each a crime;
The withering sense of evil unreveal'd,
Not cankering less because the more conceal'd; —
All, in a word, from which all eyes must start,
That opening sepulchre — the naked heart
Bares with its buried woes, till Pride awake,
To snatch the mirror from the soul — and break.
Ay — Pride can veil, and Courage brave it all,
All — all — before — beyond — the deadliest fall.
Each has some fear, and he who least betrays,
The only hypocrite deserving praise:
Not the loud recreant wretch who boasts and flies;
But he who looks on death — and silent dies.
So steel'd by pondering o'er his far career,
He half-way meets him should he menace near!

XI

In the high chamber of his highest tower
Sate Conrad, fetter'd in the Pacha's power.
His palace perish'd in the flame, this fort
Contain'd at once his captive and his court.
Not much could Conrad of his sentence blame,
His foe, if vanquish'd, had but shared the same.
Alone he sate, in solitude had scann'd
His guilty bosom, but that breast he mann'd;
One thought alone he could not, dared not meet:
'Oh, how these tidings will Medora greet?'
Then, only then, his clanking hands he raised,
And strain'd with rage the chain on which he gazed;
But soon he found, or feign'd, or dream'd relief,
And smiled in self-derision of his grief:
'And now come torture when it will — or may;
More need of rest to nerve me for the day!'
This said, with languor to his mat he crept,
And, whatsoe'er his visions, quickly slept.

'Twas hardly midnight when that fray begun,
For Conrad's plans matured, at once were done;
And Havoc loathes so much the waste of time,
She scarce had left an uncommitted crime.
One hour beheld him since the tide he stemm'd —
Disguised — discover'd — conquering — ta'en — condemn'd —
A chief on land — an outlaw on the deep —
Destroying — saving — prison'd — and asleep!

XII

He slept in calmest seeming, for his breath
Was hush'd so deep — Ah! happy if in death!
He slept — Who o'er his placid slumber bends?
His foes are gone, and here he hath no friends;

Is it some seraph sent to grant him grace?
No, 't is an earthly form with heavenly face!
Its white arm raised a lamp, yet gently hid,
Lest the ray flash abruptly on the lid
Of that closed eye, which opens but to pain,
And once unclosed — but once may close again.
That form, with eye so dark and cheek so fair,
And auburn waves of gemm'd and braided hair;
With shape of fairy lightness, naked foot,
That shines like snow and falls on earth as mute —
Through guards and dunnest night how came it there?
Ah! rather ask what will not Woman dare,
Whom youth and pity lead like thee, Gulnare?
She could not sleep; and while the Pacha's rest
In muttering dreams yet saw his pirate-guest,
She left his side: his signet-ring she bore,
Which oft in sport adorn'd her hand before;
And with it, scarcely question'd, won her way
Through drowsy guards that must that sign obey.
Worn out with toil and tired with changing blows,
Their eyes had envied Conrad his repose;
And chill and nodding at the turret door,
They stretch their listless limbs and watch no more:
Just raised their heads to hail the signet-ring,
Nor ask or what or who the sign may bring.

XIII

She gazed in wonder: 'Can he calmly sleep,
While other eyes his fall or ravage weep,
And mine in restlessness are wandering here?
What sudden spell hath made this man so dear?
True, 't is to him my life, and more, I owe,
And me and mine he spared from worse than woe.
'T is late to think — but soft, his slumber breaks —
How heavily he sighs! he starts — awakes!'

He raised his head, and dazzled with the light,
His eye seem'd dubious if it saw aright;
He moved his hand — the grating of his chain
Too harshly told him that he lived again.
'What is that form? if not a shape of air,
Methinks, my jailor's face shows wondrous fair!'

'Pirate! thou know'st me not; but I am one,
Grateful for deeds thou hast too rarely done.
Look on me, and remember her thy hand
Snatch'd from the flames and thy more fearful band.
I come through darkness — and I scarce know why —
Yet not to hurt — I would not see thee die.'

'If so, kind lady! thine the only eye
That would not here in that gay hope delight:
Theirs is the chance — and let them use their right;
But still I thank their courtesy or thine,
That would confess me at so fair a shrine!'

Strange though it seem, yet with extremest grief
Is link'd a mirth — it doth not bring relief:
That playfulness of Sorrow ne'er beguiles,
And smiles in bitterness — but still it smiles;
And sometimes with the wisest and the best,
Till even the scaffold echoes with their jest!
Yet not the joy to which it seems akin —
It may deceive all hearts, save that within.
Whate'er it was that flash'd on Conrad, now
A laughing wildness half unbent his brow:
And these his accents had a sound of mirth,
As if the last he could enjoy on earth;
Yet 'gainst his nature, for through that short life,
Few thoughts had he to spare from gloom and strife.

XIV

'Corsair, thy doom is named! but I have power
To soothe the Pacha in his weaker hour.
Thee would I spare — nay more, would save thee now,
But this — time — hope — nor even thy strength allow;
But all I can, I will: at least delay
The sentence that remits thee scarce a day.
More now were ruin — ev'n thyself were loth
The vain attempt should bring but doom to both.'

'Yes, loth indeed! my soul is nerved to all,
Or fall'n too low to fear a further fall.
Tempt not thyself with peril, me with hope
Of flight from foes with whom I could not cope:
Unfit to vanquish — shall I meanly fly,
The one of all my band that would not die?
Yet there is one — to whom my memory clings,
Till to these eyes her own wild softness springs.
My sole resources in the path I trod
Were these — my bark — my sword — my love — my God!
The last I left in youth — he leaves me now,
And Man but works his will to lay me low.
I have no thought to mock his throne with prayer
Wrung from the coward crouching of despair;
It is enough — I breathe — and I can bear.
My sword is shaken from the worthless hand
That might have better kept so true a brand;
My bark is sunk or captive; but my love—
For her in sooth my voice would mount above.
Oh! she is all that still to earth can bind;
And this will break a heart so more than kind,
And blight a form — till thine appear'd, Gulnare,
Mine eye ne'er ask'd if others were as fair.'

'Thou lov'st another then? — but what to me
Is this — 't is nothing — nothing e'er can be:
But yet — thou lov'st — and — Oh! I envy those
Whose hearts on hearts as faithful can repose,
Who never feel the void, the wandering thought
That sighs o'er visions — such as mine hath wrought.'

'Lady — methought thy love was his, for whom
This arm redeem'd thee from a fiery tomb.'

'My love stern Seyd's! Oh — No — No — not my love —
Yet much this heart, that strives no more, once strove
To meet his passion — but it would not be.
I felt — I feel — love dwells with — with the free:
I am a slave, a favour'd slave at best,
To share his splendour, and seem very blest!
Oft must my soul the question undergo,
Of — "Dost thou love?" and burn to answer, "No!"
Oh! hard it is that fondness to sustain,
And struggle not to feel averse in vain;
But harder still the heart's recoil to bear,
And hide from one — perhaps another there.
He takes the hand I give not — nor withhold,
Its pulse nor check'd — nor quicken'd — calmly cold:
And when resign'd, it drops a lifeless weight
From one I never loved enough to hate.
No warmth these lips return by his imprest,
And chill'd remembrance shudders o'er the rest.
Yes — had I ever proved that Passion's zeal,
The change to hatred were at least to feel:
But still — he goes unmourn'd — returns unsought —
And oft when present — absent from my thought.
Or when reflection comes — and come it must —
I fear that henceforth 't will but bring disgust;
I am his slave — but, in despite of pride,
'T were worse than bondage to become his bride.

Oh! that this dotage of his breast would cease!
Or seek another and give mine release —
But yesterday I could have said, to peace!
Yes, if unwonted fondness now I feign,
Remember, captive, 't is to break thy chain;
Repay the life that to thy hand I owe;
To give thee back to all endear'd below,
Who share such love as I can never know.
Farewell — morn breaks — and I must now away:
'T will cost me dear — but dread no death to-day!'

XV

She press'd his fetter'd fingers to her heart,
And bow'd her head, and turn'd her to depart,
And noiseless as a lovely dream is gone.
And was she here? and is he now alone?
What gem hath dropp'd and sparkles o'er his chain?
The tear most sacred, shed for others' pain,
That starts at once — bright — pure — from Pity's mine,
Already polish'd by the hand divine!

Oh! too convincing, dangerously dear,
In woman's eye the unanswerable tear!
That weapon of her weakness she can wield,
To save, subdue — at once her spear and shield:
Avoid it — Virtue ebbs and Wisdom errs,
Too fondly gazing on that grief of hers!
What lost a world and bade a hero fly?
The timid tear in Cleopatra's eye.
Yet be the soft triumvir's fault forgiven;
By this how many lose not earth — but heaven!
Consign their souls to man's eternal foe,
And seal their own to spare some wanton's woe!

XVI

'T is Morn — and o'er his alter'd features play
The beams, without the Hope of yesterday.
What shall he be ere night? perchance a thing
O'er which the raven flaps her funeral wing,
By his closed eye unheeded and unfelt,
While sets that Sun and Dews of evening melt,
Chill — wet — and misty round each stiffen'd limb,
Refreshing earth — reviving all but him!

CANTO THE THIRD

Come vedi, ancor non m' abbandona.
Dante. [*Inferno*, v. 105.]

I

Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,
Along Morea's hills the setting sun;
Not, as in northern climes, obscurely bright,
But one unclouded blaze of living light!
O'er the hush'd deep the yellow beam he throws,
Gilds the green wave that trembles as it glows.
On old Ægina's rock and Idra's isle
The god of gladness sheds his parting smile;
O'er his own regions lingering, loves to shine,
Though there his altars are no more divine.
Descending fast, the mountain shadows kiss
Thy glorious gulf, unconquer'd Salamis!
Their azure arches through the long expanse
More deeply purpled meet his mellowing glance,
And tenderest tints, along their summits driven,
Mark his gay course and own the hues of heaven;
Till, darkly shaded from the land and deep,
Behind his Delphian cliff he sinks to sleep.

On such an eve his palest beam he cast
When, Athens! here thy Wisest look'd his last.
How watch'd thy better sons his farewell ray,
That closed their murder'd sage's latest day!
Not yet — not yet — Sol pauses on the hill,
The precious hour of parting lingers still;
But sad his light to agonising eyes,
And dark the mountain's once delightful dyes:
Gloom o'er the lovely land he seem'd to pour,
The land where Phœbus never frown'd before;

But here he sank below Cithæron's head,
The cup of woe was quaff'd — the spirit fled;
The soul of him who scorn'd to fear or fly,
Who lived and died as none can live or die!

But lo! from high Hymettus to the plain,
The queen of night asserts her silent reign.
No murky vapour, herald of the storm,
Hides her fair face, nor girds her glowing form.
With cornice glimmering as the moonbeams play,
There the white column greets her grateful ray,
And, bright around with quivering beams beset,
Her emblem sparkles o'er the minaret:
The groves of olive, scatter'd dark and wide
Where meek Cephisus pours his scanty tide,
The cypress saddening by the sacred mosque,
The gleaming turret of the gay kiosk,
And, dun and sombre 'mid the holy calm,
Near Theseus' fane yon solitary palm;
All tinged with varied hues, arrest the eye —
And dull were his that pass'd them heedless by.

Again the Ægean, heard no more afar,
Lulls his chafed breast from elemental war;
Again his waves in milder tints unfold
Their long array of sapphire and of gold,
Mix'd with the shades of many a distant isle
That frown, where gentler ocean seems to smile.

II

Not now my theme — why turn my thoughts to thee?
Oh! who can look along thy native sea,
Nor dwell upon thy name, whate'er the tale,
So much its magic must o'er all prevail?
Who that beheld that sun upon thee set,
Fair Athens! could thine evening face forget?
Not he, whose heart nor time nor distance frees,
Spell-bound within the clustering Cyclades!
Nor seems this homage foreign to his strain,
His Corsair's isle was once thine own domain —
Would that with freedom it were thine again!

III

The sun hath sunk, and, darker than the night,
Sinks with its beam upon the beacon height
Medora's heart; the third day 's come and gone —
With it he comes not, sends not — faithless one!
The wind was fair though light; and storms were none.
Last eve Anselmo's bark return'd, and yet
His only tidings that they had not met! —
Though wild, as now, far different were the tale
Had Conrad waited for that single sail.

The night-breeze freshens; she that day had pass'd
In watching all that Hope proclaim'd a mast;
Sadly she sate on high — Impatience bore
At last her footsteps to the midnight shore,
And there she wander'd, heedless of the spray
That dash'd her garments oft, and warn'd away.
She saw not, felt not this, nor dared depart,
Nor deem'd it cold — her chill was at her heart;
Till grew such certainty from that suspense,
His very sight had shock'd from life or sense!

It came at last — a sad and shatter'd boat,
Whose inmates first beheld whom first they sought;
Some bleeding — all most wretched — these the few —
Scarce knew they how escaped — this all they knew.
In silence, darkling, each appear'd to wait
His fellow's mournful guess at Conrad's fate.
Something they would have said; but seem'd to fear
To trust their accents to Medora's ear.

She saw at once, yet sunk not — trembled not;
Beneath that grief, that loneliness of lot,
Within that meek fair form, were feelings high,
That deem'd not till they found their energy.
While yet was Hope — they soften'd — flutter'd — wept;
All lost — that softness died not, but it slept;
And o'er its slumber rose that Strength which said,
'With nothing left to love, there 's nought to dread.'
'T is more than nature's; like the burning might
Delirium gathers from the fever's height.

'Silent you stand, nor would I hear you tell
What — speak not, breathe not — for I know it well —
Yet would I ask — almost my lip denies
The — quick your answer — tell me where he lies.'

'Lady! we know not — scarce with life we fled;
But here is one denies that he is dead:
He saw him bound; and bleeding — but alive.'

She heard no further — 't was in vain to strive,
So throbb'd each vein, each thought, till then withstood;
Her own dark soul these words at once subdued:
She totters — falls — and senseless had the wave
Perchance but snatch'd her from another grave;
But that with hands though rude, yet weeping eyes,
They yield such aid as Pity's haste supplies:
Dash o'er her deathlike cheek the ocean dew,
Raise, fan, sustain — till life returns anew;
Awake her handmaids, with the matrons leave
That fainting form o'er which they gaze and grieve;
Then seek Anselmo's cavern, to report
The tale too tedious — when the triumph short.

IV

In that wild council words wax'd warm and strange,
With thoughts of ransom, rescue, and revenge;
All, save repose or flight. Still lingering there
Breathed Conrad's spirit, and forbade despair;
Whate'er his fate — the breasts he form'd and led
Will save him living or appease him dead.
Woe to his foes! there yet survive a few,
Whose deeds are daring as their hearts are true.

V

Within the Haram's secret chamber sate
Stern Seyd, still pondering o'er his Captive's fate;
His thoughts on love and hate alternate dwell,
Now with Gulnare, and now in Conrad's cell.
Here at his feet the lovely slave reclined
Surveys his brow — would soothe his gloom of mind:
While many an anxious glance her large dark eye
Sends in its idle search for sympathy,
His only bends in seeming o'er his beads,
But inly views his victim as he bleeds.

'Pacha! the day is thine; and on thy crest
Sits Triumph — Conrad taken, fall'n the rest!
His doom is fix'd — he dies: and well his fate
Was earn'd — yet much too worthless for thy hate:
Methinks, a short release, for ransom told
With all his treasure, not unwisely sold;
Report speaks largely of his pirate-hoard —
Would that of this my Pacha were the lord!
While baffled, weaken'd by this fatal fray —
Watch'd — follow'd — he were then an easier prey;
But once cut off — the remnant of his band
Embark their wealth and seek a safer strand.'

'Gulnare! if for each drop of blood a gem
Were offer'd rich as Stamboul's diadem;
If for each hair of his a massy mine
Of virgin ore should supplicating shine;

If all our Arab tales divulge or dream
Of wealth were here — that gold should not redeem!
It had not now redeem'd a single hour;
But that I know him fetter'd, in my power;
And, thirsting for revenge, I ponder still
On pangs that longest rack and latest kill.'

'Nay, Seyd! — I seek not to restrain thy rage,
Too justly moved for mercy to assuage;
My thoughts were only to secure for thee
His riches — thus released, he were not free:
Disabled, shorn of half his might and band,
His capture could but wait thy first command.'

'His capture *could!* — and shall I then resign
One day to him — the wretch already mine?
Release my foe! — at whose remonstrance? — thine!
Fair suitor! — to thy virtuous gratitude,
That thus repays this Giaour's relenting mood,
Which thee and thine alone of all could spare,
No doubt regardless if the prize were fair, —
My thanks and praise alike are due — now hear!
I have a counsel for thy gentler ear:
I do mistrust thee, woman! and each word
Of thine stamps truth on all Suspicion heard.
Borne in his arms through fire from yon Serai —
Say, wert thou lingering there with him to fly?
Thou need'st not answer — thy confession speaks,
Already reddening on thy guilty cheeks;
Then, lovely dame, bethink thee! and beware:
'T is not *his* life alone may claim such care!
Another word and — nay — I need no more.
Accursèd was the moment when he bore
Thee from the flames, which better far — but — no —
I then had mourn'd thee with a lover's woe;
Now 't is thy lord that warns — deceitful thing!
Know'st thou that I can clip thy wanton wing?
In words alone I am not wont to chafe:
Look to thyself, nor deem thy falsehood safe!'

He rose — and slowly, sternly thence withdrew,
Rage in his eye and threats in his adieu:
Ah! little reck'd that chief of womanhood,
Which frowns ne'er quell'd nor menaces subdued;
And little deem'd he what thy heart, Gulnare,
When soft could feel, and when incensed could dare.
His doubts appear'd to wrong — nor yet she knew
How deep the root from whence compassion grew;
She was a slave — from such may captives claim
A fellow-feeling, differing but in name.
Still half unconscious, heedless of his wrath,
Again she ventured on the dangerous path,
Again his rage repell'd — until arose
That strife of thought, the source of woman's woes!

VI

Meanwhile long anxious, weary, still the same
Roll'd day and night: his soul, could terror tame,
This fearful interval of doubt and dread,
When every hour might doom him worse than dead,
When every step that echo'd by the gate
Might entering lead where axe and stake await;
When every voice that grated on his ear
Might be the last that he could ever hear; —
Could Terror tame, that spirit stern and high
Had proved unwilling as unfit to die.
'T was worn, perhaps decay'd, yet silent bore
That conflict, deadlier far than all before.
The heat of fight, the hurry of the gale,
Leave scarce one thought inert enough to quail:
But bound and fix'd in fetter'd solitude,
To pine, the prey of every changing mood;
To gaze on thine own heart, and meditate
Irrevocable faults and coming fate —
Too late the last to shun, the first to mend;
To count the hours that struggle to thine end,

With not a friend to animate, and tell
To other ears that death became thee well;
Around thee foes to forge the ready lie,
And blot life's latest scene with calumny;
Before thee tortures, which the soul can dare,
Yet doubts how well the shrinking flesh may bear,
But deeply feels a single cry would shame,
To valour's praise thy last and dearest claim;
The life thou leav'st below, denied above
By kind monopolists of heavenly love;
And more than doubtful paradise, thy heaven
Of earthly hope, thy loved one from thee riven;—
Such were the thoughts that outlaw must sustain,
And govern pangs surpassing mortal pain:
And those sustain'd he — boots it well or ill?
Since not to sink beneath, is something still!

VII

The first day pass'd; he saw not her, Gulnare;
The second — third — and still she came not there;
But what her words avouch'd, her charms had done,
Or else he had not seen another sun.
The fourth day roll'd along, and with the night
Came storm and darkness in their mingling might.
Oh! how he listen'd to the rushing deep,
That ne'er till now so broke upon his sleep:
And his wild spirit wilder wishes sent,
Roused by the roar of his own element!
Oft had he ridden on that wingèd wave,
And loved its roughness for the speed it gave;
And now its dashing echo'd on his ear,
A long-known voice — alas! too vainly near!
Loud sung the wind above; and, doubly loud,
Shook o'er his turret cell the thunder-cloud;
And flash'd the lightning by the latticed bar,
To him more genial than the midnight star:
Close to the glimmering grate he dragg'd his chain,
And hoped *that* peril might not prove in vain.
He raised his iron hand to Heaven, and pray'd
One pitying flash to mar the form it made:
His steel and impious prayer attract alike —
The storm roll'd onward, and disdain'd to strike;
Its peal wax'd fainter — ceased — he felt alone,
As if some faithless friend had spurn'd his groan!

VIII

The midnight pass'd, and to the massy door
A light step came — it paused — it moved once more;
Slow turns the grating bolt and sullen key:
'T is as his heart foreboded — that fair she!
Whate'er her sins, to him a guardian saint,
And beauteous still as hermit's hope can paint;
Yet changed since last within that cell she came,
More pale her cheek, more tremulous her frame.
On him she cast her dark and hurried eye,
Which spoke before her accents — 'Thou must die!
Yes, thou must die; there is but one resource,
The last — the worst — if torture were not worse.'

'Lady! I look to none; my lips proclaim
What last proclaim'd they — Conrad still the same.
Why should'st thou seek an outlaw's life to spare,
And change the sentence I deserve to bear?
Well have I earn'd — nor here alone — the meed
Of Seyd's revenge, by many a lawless deed.'

'Why should I seek? because — Oh! didst thou not
Redeem my life from worse than slavery's lot?

Why should I seek? — hath misery made thee blind
To the fond workings of a woman's mind?
And must I say? albeit my heart rebel
With all that woman feels, but should not tell —
Because, despite thy crimes, that heart is moved:
It fear'd thee — thank'd thee — pitied — madden'd — loved.
Reply not, tell not now thy tale again,
Thou lov'st another — and I love in vain;
Though fond as mine her bosom, form more fair,
I rush through peril which she would not dare.
If that thy heart to hers were truly dear,
Were I thine own, thou wert not lonely here:
An outlaw's spouse — and leave her lord to roam!
What hath such gentle dame to do with home?
But speak not now — o'er thine and o'er my head
Hangs the keen sabre by a single thread;
If thou hast courage still, and wouldst be free,
Receive this poinard — rise, and follow me!'

'Ay, in my chains! my steps will gently tread,
With these adornments, o'er each slumbering head!
Thou hast forgot — is this a garb for flight?
Or is that instrument more fit for fight?'

'Misdoubting Corsair! I have gain'd the guard,
Ripe for revolt, and greedy for reward.
A single word of mine removes that chain:
Without some aid how here could I remain?
Well, since we met, hath sped my busy time,
If in aught evil, for thy sake the crime:
The crime — 'tis none to punish those of Seyd.
That hated tyrant, Conrad — he must bleed!
I see thee shudder, but my soul is changed —
Wrong'd, spurn'd, reviled — and it shall be avenged;
Accused of what till now my heart disdain'd —
Too faithful, though to bitter bondage chain'd.
Yes, smile! — but he had little cause to sneer,
I was not treacherous then, nor thou too dear:
But he has said it, and the jealous well
(Those tyrants, teasing, tempting to rebel)
Deserve the fate their fretting lips foretell.
I never loved — he bought me — somewhat high,
Since with me came a heart he could not buy.
I was a slave unmurmuring: he hath said,
But for his rescue I with thee had fled.
'T was false thou know'st; but let such augurs rue,
Their words are omens Insult renders true.
Nor was thy respite granted to my prayer;
This fleeting grace was only to prepare
New torments for thy life, and my despair.
Mine too he threatens; but his dotage still
Would fain reserve me for his lordly will:
When wearier of these fleeting charms and me,
There yawns the sack — and yonder rolls the sea!
What, am I then a toy for dotard's play,
To wear but till the gilding frets away?
I saw thee — loved thee — owe thee all — would save,
If but to show how grateful is a slave.
But had he not thus menaced fame and life
(And well he keeps his oaths pronounced in strife),
I still had saved thee — but the Pacha spared.
Now I am all thine own — for all prepared:
Thou lov'st me not — nor know'st — or but the worst.
Alas! *this* love, *that* hatred are the first —
Oh! couldst thou prove my truth, thou wouldst not start,
Nor fear the fire that lights an Eastern heart;
'T is now the beacon of thy safety — now
It points within the port a Mainote prow:
But in one chamber, where our path must lead,
There sleeps — he must not wake — the oppressor Seyd!'

Gulnare — Gulnare — I never felt till now
My abject fortune, wither'd fame so low!
Seyd is mine enemy, had swept my band
From earth with ruthless but with open hand;
And therefore came I, in my bark of war,
To smite the smiter with the scimitar;
Such is my weapon — not the secret knife;
Who spares a woman's seeks not slumber's life.
Thine saved I gladly, Lady, not for this —
Let me not deem that mercy shown amiss.
Now fare thee well — more peace be with thy breast!
Night wears apace, my last of earthly rest!'

'Rest! rest! by sunrise must thy sinews shake,
And thy limbs writhe around the ready stake.
I heard the order — saw — I will not see —
If thou wilt perish, I will fall with thee.
My life — my love — my hatred — all below
Are on this cast; Corsair! 't is but a blow!
Without it flight were idle — how evade
His sure pursuit? my wrongs too unrepaid,
My youth disgraced — the long, long wasted years,
One blow shall cancel with our future fears.
But since the dagger suits thee less than brand,
I'll try the firmness of a female hand.
The guards are gain'd — one moment all were o'er —
Corsair! we meet in safety or no more;
If errs my feeble hand, the morning cloud
Will hover o'er thy scaffold, and my shroud.'

IX

She turn'd, and vanish'd ere he could reply,
But his glance follow'd far with eager eye;
And gathering, as he could, the links that bound
His form, to curl their length and curb their sound,
Since bar and bolt no more his steps preclude,
He, fast as fetter'd limbs allow, pursued.
'T was dark and winding, and he knew not where
That passage led; nor lamp nor guard was there.
He sees a dusky glimmering — shall he seek
Or shun that ray so indistinct and weak?
Chance guides his steps — a freshness seems to bear
Full on his brow, as if from morning air;
He reach'd an open gallery — on his eye
Gleam'd the last star of night, the clearing sky:
Yet scarcely heeded these — another light
From a lone chamber struck upon his sight.
Towards it he moved; a scarcely closing door
Reveal'd the ray within, but nothing more.
With hasty step a figure outward pass'd,
Then paused — and turn'd — and paused — 't is She at last!
No poniard in that hand, nor sign of ill —
'Thanks to that softening heart, she could not kill!'
Again he look'd, the wildness of her eye
Starts from the day abrupt and fearfully.
She stopp'd — threw back her dark far-floating hair,
That nearly veil'd her face and bosom fair:
As if she late had bent her leaning head
Above some object of her doubt or dread.
They meet — upon her brow, unknown, forgot,
Her hurrying hand had left — 't was but a spot —
Its hue was all he saw, and scarce withstood —
Oh! slight but certain pledge of crime — 't is blood!

X

He had seen battle, he had brooded lone
O'er promised pangs to sentenced guilt foreshown;
He had been tempted, chasten'd, and the chain
Yet on his arms might ever there remain:
But ne'er from strife, captivity, remorse,
From all his feelings in their inmost force,
So thrill'd, so shudder'd every creeping vein,
As now they froze before that purple stain.
That spot of blood, that light but guilty streak,
Had banish'd all the beauty from her cheek!
Blood he had view'd — could view unmoved — but then
It flow'd in combat, or was shed by men!

XI

‘’T is done — he nearly waked — but it is done;
Corsair! he perish’d — thou art dearly won.
All words would now be vain — away — away!
Our bark is tossing — ’t is already day.
The few gain’d over, now are wholly mine,
And these thy yet surviving band shall join:
Anon my voice shall vindicate my hand,
When once our sail forsakes this hated strand!’

XII

She clapp’d her hands, and through the gallery pour,
Equipp’d for flight, her vassals — Greek and Moor;
Silent but quick they stoop, his chains unbind;
Once more his limbs are free as mountain wind!
But on his heavy heart such sadness sate,
As if they there transferr’d that iron weight.
No words are utter’d; at her sign, a door
Reveals the secret passage to the shore;
The city lies behind — they speed, they reach
The glad waves dancing on the yellow beach;
And Conrad following, at her beck, obey’d,
Nor cared he now if rescued or betray’d;
Resistance were as useless as if Seyd
Yet lived to view the doom his ire decreed.

XIII

Embark’d, the sail unfurl’d, the light breeze blew —
How much had Conrad’s memory to review!
Sunk he in Contemplation, till the Cape
Where last he anchor’d rear’d its giant shape.
Ah! since that fatal night, though brief the time,
Had swept an age of terror, grief, and crime.
As its far shadow frown’d above the mast,
He veil’d his face and sorrow’d as he pass’d;
He thought of all — Gonsalvo and his band,
His fleeting triumph and his failing hand;
He thought on her afar, his lonely bride:
He turn’d and saw — Gulnare, the homicide!

XIV

She watch’d his features till she could not bear
Their freezing aspect and averted air;
And that strange fierceness, foreign to her eye,
Fell quench’d in tears, too late to shed or dry.
She knelt beside him and his hand she press’d,
‘Thou may’st forgive though Allah’s self detest;
But for that deed of darkness what wert thou?
Reproach me — but not yet — Oh! spare me *now!*
I am not what I seem — this fearful night
My brain bewilder’d — do not madden quite!
If I had never loved — though less my guilt,
Thou hadst not lived to — hate me — if thou wilt.’

XV

She wrongs his thoughts, they more himself upbraid
Than her, though undesign’d, the wretch he made;
But speechless all, deep, dark, and unexprest,
They bleed within that silent cell — his breast.
Still onward, fair the breeze, nor rough the surge,
The blue waves sport around the stern they urge;
Far on the horizon’s verge appears a speck,
A spot — a mast — a sail — an armèd deck!
Their little bark her men of watch descry,
And ampler canvass woos the wind from high;
She bears her down majestically near,
Speed on her prow, and terror in her tier;
A flash is seen — the ball beyond their bow
Booms harmless, hissing to the deep below.
Up rose keen Conrad from his silent trance,
A long, long absent gladness in his glance;
‘’T is mine — my blood-red flag! again — again —
I am not all deserted on the main!’

They own the signal, answer to the hail,
Hoist out the boat at once, and slacken sail.
''T is Conrad! Conrad!' shouting from the deck,
Command nor duty could their transport check!
With light alacrity and gaze of pride,
They view him mount once more his vessel's side;
A smile relaxing in each rugged face,
Their arms can scarce forbear a rough embrace.
He, half forgetting danger and defeat,
Returns their greeting as a chief may greet,
Wrings with a cordial grasp Anselmo's hand,
And feels he yet can conquer and command!

XVI

These greetings o'er, the feelings that o'erflow,
Yet grieve to win him back without a blow;
They sail'd prepared for vengeance — had they known
A woman's hand secured that deed her own,
She were their queen; less scrupulous are they
Than haughty Conrad how they win their way.
With many an asking smile and wondering stare,
They whisper round and gaze upon Gulnare;
And her, — at once above, beneath her sex,
Whom blood appall'd not, — their regards perplex.
To Conrad turns her faint imploring eye,
She drops her veil, and stands in silence by;
Her arms are meekly folded on that breast,
Which — Conrad safe — to fate resign'd the rest.
Though worse than frenzy could that bosom fill,
Extreme in love or hate, in good or ill,
The worst of crimes had left her woman still!

XVII

This Conrad mark'd, and felt — ah! could he less? —
Hate of that deed but grief for her distress;
What she has done no tears can wash away,
And Heaven must punish on its angry day.
But — it was done: he knew, whate'er her guilt,
For him that poniard smote, that blood was spilt;
And he was free! — and she for him had given
Her all on earth and more than all in heaven!
And now he turn'd him to that dark-eyed slave,
Whose brow was bow'd beneath the glance he gave,
Who now seem'd changed and humbled: — faint and meek,
But varying oft the colour of her cheek
To deeper shades of paleness, all its red
That fearful spot which stain'd it from the dead!
He took that hand — it trembled — now too late —
So soft in love, so wildly nerved in hate;
He clasp'd that hand — it trembled — and his own
Had lost its firmness, and his voice its tone.
'Gulnare!' — but she replied not — 'dear Gulnare!'
She raised her eye, her only answer there;
At once she sought and sunk in his embrace:
If he had driven her from that resting-place,
His had been more or less than mortal heart,
But — good or ill — it bade her not depart.
Perchance, but for the bodings of his breast,
His latest virtue then had join'd the rest.
Yet even Medora might forgive the kiss
That ask'd from form so fair no more than this,
The first, the last that Frailty stole from Faith —
To lips where Love had lavish'd all his breath,
To lips whose broken sighs such fragrance fling,
As he had fann'd them freshly with his wing!

XVIII

They gain by twilight's hour their lonely isle.
To them the very rocks appear to smile;
The haven hums with many a cheering sound,
The beacons blaze their wonted stations round,

The boats are darting o'er the curly bay,
And sportive dolphins bend them through the spray;
Even the hoarse sea-bird's shrill, discordant shriek
Greets like the welcome of his tuneless beak!
Beneath each lamp that through its lattice gleams,
Their fancy paints the friends that trim the beams.
Oh! what can sanctify the joys of home,
Like Hope's gay glance from Ocean's troubled foam?

XIX

The lights are high on beacon and from bower,
And 'midst them Conrad seeks Medora's tower:
He looks in vain — 't is strange — and all remark,
Amid so many, hers alone is dark.
'T is strange — of yore its welcome never fail'd,
Nor now, perchance, extinguish'd, only veil'd.
With the first boat descends he for the shore,
And looks impatient on the lingering oar.
Oh! for a wing beyond the falcon's flight,
To bear him like an arrow to that height!
With the first pause the resting rowers gave,
He waits not — looks not — leaps into the wave,
Strives through the surge, bestrides the beach, and high
Ascends the path familiar to his eye.

He reach'd his turret door; he paused — no sound
Broke from within, and all was night around.
He knock'd, and loudly — footstep nor reply
Announced that any heard or deem'd him nigh;
He knock'd — but faintly — for his trembling hand
Refused to aid his heavy heart's demand.
The portal opens — 't is a well-known face —
But not the form he panted to embrace.
Its lips are silent; twice his own essay'd,
And fail'd to frame the question they delay'd;
He snatch'd the lamp — its light will answer all —
It quits his grasp, expiring in the fall.
He would not wait for that reviving ray —
As soon could he have linger'd there for day;
But, glimmering through the dusky corridore,
Another chequers o'er the shadow'd floor;
His steps the chamber gain, his eyes behold
All that his heart believed not — yet foretold!

XX

He turn'd not — spoke not — sunk not — fix'd his look,
And set the anxious frame that lately shook:
He gazed — how long we gaze despite of pain,
And know, but dare not own, we gaze in vain!
In life itself she was so still and fair,
That death with gentler aspect wither'd there;
And the cold flowers her colder hand contain'd,
In that last grasp as tenderly were strain'd
As if she scarcely felt, but feign'd a sleep,
And made it almost mockery yet to weep.
The long dark lashes fringed her lids of snow,
And veil'd — thought shrinks from all that lurk'd below —
Oh! o'er the eye Death most exerts his might,
And hurls the spirit from her throne of light!
Sinks those blue orbs in that long last eclipse,
But spares, as yet, the charm around her lips;
Yet, yet they seem as they forebore to smile,
And wish'd repose — but only for a while;
But the white shroud, and each extended tress,
Long, fair, but spread in utter lifelessness,
Which, late the sport of every summer wind,
Escaped the baffled wreath that strove to bind;
These and the pale pure cheek became the bier —
But she is nothing — wherefore is he here?

XXI

He ask'd no question — all were answer'd now
By the first glance on that still, marble brow.
It was enough — she died — what reck'd it how?
The love of youth, the hope of better years,
The source of softest wishes, tenderest fears,
The only living thing he could not hate,
Was reft at once — and he deserved his fate,
But did not feel it less; — the good explore,
For peace, those realms where guilt can never soar:
The proud, the wayward, who have fix'd below
Their joy and find this earth enough for woe,
Lose in that one their all — perchance a mite —
But who in patience parts with all delight?
Full many a stoic eye and aspect stern
Mask hearts where grief hath little left to learn;
And many a withering thought lies hid, not lost,
In smiles that least befit who wear them most.

XXII

By those that deepest feel is ill exprest
The indistinctness of the suffering breast;
Where thousand thoughts begin, to end in one
Which seeks from all the refuge found in none;
No words suffice the secret soul to show,
For Truth denies all eloquence to Woe.
On Conrad's stricken soul exhaustion prest,
And stupor almost lull'd it into rest;
So feeble now — his mother's softness crept
To those wild eyes, which like an infant's wept:
It was the very weakness of his brain,
Which thus confess'd without relieving pain.
None saw his trickling tears — perchance, if seen,
That useless flood of grief had never been:
Nor long they flow'd — he dried them to depart,
In helpless, hopeless, brokenness of heart:
The sun goes forth, but Conrad's day is dim;
And the night cometh, ne'er to pass from him.
There is no darkness like the cloud of mind
On Grief's vain eye — the blindest of the blind!
Which may not, dare not see, but turns aside
To blackest shade, nor will endure a guide!

XXIII

His heart was form'd for softness, warp'd to wrong;
Betray'd too early, and beguiled too long;
Each feeling pure — as falls the dropping dew
Within the grot, like that had harden'd too;
Less clear, perchance, its earthly trials pass'd,
But sunk, and chill'd, and petrified at last.
Yet tempests wear, and lightning cleaves the rock;
If such his heart, so shatter'd it the shock.
There grew one flower beneath its rugged brow;
Though dark the shade, it shelter'd, saved till now.
The thunder came; that bolt hath blasted both,
The Granite's firmness and the Lily's growth:
The gentle plant hath left no leaf to tell
Its tale, but shrunk and wither'd where it fell;
And of its cold protector, blacken round
But shiver'd fragments on the barren ground!

XXIV

'T is morn; to venture on his lonely hour
Few dare, though now Anselmo sought his tower.
He was not there, nor seen along the shore;
Ere night, alarm'd, their isle is traversed o'er.
Another morn — another bids them seek,
And shout his name till echo waxeth weak;
Mount, grotto, cavern, valley search'd in vain,
They find on shore a seaboat's broken chain:
Their hope revives, they follow o'er the main.

'T is idle all; moons roll on moons away,
And Conrad comes not, came not since that day:
Nor trace, nor tidings of his doom declare
Where lives his grief, or perish'd his despair!
Long mourn'd his band whom none could mourn beside;
And fair the monument they gave his bride:
For him they raise not the recording stone —
His death yet dubious, deeds too widely known;
He left a Corsair's name to other times,
Link'd with one virtue and a thousand crimes.

LARA

A TALE

CANTO THE FIRST

I

The Serfs are glad through Lara's wide domain,
And Slavery half forgets her feudal chain;
He, their unhoped, but unforgotten lord,
The long self-exiled chieftain, is restored.
There be bright faces in the busy hall,
Bowls on the board, and banners on the wall;
Far checkering o'er the pictured window, plays
The unwonted faggots' hospitable blaze;
And gay retainers gather round the hearth,
With tongues all loudness and with eyes all mirth.

II

The chief of Lara is return'd again:
And why had Lara cross'd the bounding main?
Left by his sire, too young such loss to know,
Lord of himself — that heritage of woe,
That fearful empire which the human breast
But holds to rob the heart within of rest!
With none to check and few to point in time
The thousand paths that slope the way to crime;
Then, when he most required commandment, then
Had Lara's daring boyhood govern'd men.
It skills not, boots not, step by step to trace
His youth through all the mazes of its race;
Short was the course his restlessness had run,
But long enough to leave him half undone.

III

And Lara left in youth his father-land;
But from the hour he waved his parting hand
Each trace wax'd fainter of his course, till all
Had nearly ceased his memory to recall.
His sire was dust, his vassals could declare,
'T was all they knew, that Lara was not there;
Nor sent, nor came he, till conjecture grew
Cold in the many, anxious in the few.
His hall scarce echoes with his wonted name,
His portrait darkens in its fading frame,
Another chief consoled his destined bride,
The young forgot him, and the old had died.
'Yet doth he live!' exclaims the impatient heir,
And sighs for sables which he must not wear.
A hundred scutcheons deck with gloomy grace
The Laras' last and longest dwelling-place;
But one is absent from the mouldering file,
That now were welcome in that Gothic pile.

IV

He comes at last in sudden loneliness,
And whence they know not, why they need not guess;
They more might marvel, when the greeting 's o'er,
Not that he came, but came not long before:
No train is his beyond a single page,
Of foreign aspect and of tender age.
Years had roll'd on, and fast they speed away
To those that wander as to those that stay;
But lack of tidings from another clime
Had lent a flagging wing to weary Time.

They see, they recognize, yet almost deem
The present dubious, or the past a dream.

He lives, nor yet is past his manhood's prime,
Though sear'd by toil, and something touch'd by time;
His faults, whate'er they were, if scarce forgot,
Might be untaught him by his varied lot;
Nor good nor ill of late were known, his name
Might yet uphold his patrimonial fame.
His soul in youth was haughty, but his sins
No more than pleasure from the stripling wins;
And such, if not yet harden'd in their course,
Might be redeem'd nor ask a long remorse.

V

And they indeed were changed — 't is quickly seen,
Whate'er he be, 't was not what he had been:
That brow in furrow'd lines had fix'd at last,
And spake of passions, but of passion past.
The pride, but not the fire, of early days,
Coldness of mien, and carelessness of praise;
A high demeanour, and a glance that took
Their thoughts from others by a single look;
And that sarcastic levity of tongue,
The stinging of a heart the world hath stung,
That darts in seeming playfulness around,
And makes those feel that will not own the wound, —
All these seem'd his, and something more beneath
Than glance could well reveal or accent breathe.
Ambition, glory, love, the common aim,
That some can conquer, and that all would claim,
Within his breast appear'd no more to strive,
Yet seem'd as lately they had been alive;
And some deep feeling it were vain to trace
At moments lighten'd o'er his livid face.

VI

Not much he loved long question of the past,
Nor told of wondrous wilds and deserts vast
In those far lands, where he had wander'd lone
And — as himself would have it seem — unknown.
Yet these in vain his eye could scarcely scan,
Nor glean experience from his fellow man;
But what he had beheld he shunn'd to show,
As hardly worth a stranger's care to know;
If still more prying such enquiry grew,
His brow fell darker, and his words more few.

VII

Not unrejoiced to see him once again,
Warm was his welcome to the haunts of men.
Born of high lineage, link'd in high command,
He mingled with the Magnates of his land;
Join'd the carousals of the great and gay,
And saw them smile or sigh their hours away;
But still he only saw and did not share
The common pleasure or the general care;
He did not follow what they all pursued
With hope still baffled still to be renew'd, —
Nor shadowy honour, nor substantial gain,
Nor beauty's preference, and the rival's pain.
Around him some mysterious circle thrown
Repell'd approach and show'd him still alone;
Upon his eye sat something of reproof,
That kept at least frivolity aloof;
And things more timid that beheld him near,
In silence gazed or whisper'd mutual fear;
And they the wiser, friendlier few confess'd
They deem'd him better than his air express'd.

VIII

'T was strange — in youth all action and all life,
Burning for pleasure, not averse from strife;
Woman, the field, the ocean, all that gave
Promise of gladness, peril of a grave,
In turn he tried — he ransack'd all below,
And found his recompense in joy or woe,
No tame, trite medium; for his feelings sought
In that intenseness an escape from thought.
The tempest of his heart in scorn had gazed
On that the feebler elements hath raised;

The rapture of his heart had look'd on high,
And ask'd if greater dwelt beyond the sky.
Chain'd to excess, the slave of each extreme,
How woke he from the wildness of that dream?
Alas, he told not! but he did awake
To curse the wither'd heart that would not break.

IX

Books, for his volume heretofore was Man,
With eye more curious he appear'd to scan,
And oft, in sudden mood, for many a day,
From all communion he would start away:
And then, his rarely call'd attendants said,
Through night's long hours would sound his hurried tread
O'er the dark gallery, where his fathers frown'd
In rude but antique portraiture around.
They heard, but whisper'd — '*that* must not be known —
The sound of words less earthly than his own.
Yes, they who chose might smile, but some had seen
They scarce knew what, but more than should have been.
Why gazed he so upon the ghastly head
Which hands profane had gather'd from the dead,
That still beside his open'd volume lay,
As if to startle all save him away?
Why slept he not when others were at rest?
Why heard no music and received no guest?
All was not well, they deem'd — but where the wrong?
Some knew perchance, but 't were a tale too long;
And such besides were too discreetly wise,
To more than hint their knowledge in surmise;
But if they would — they could' — around the board,
Thus Lara's vassals prattled of their lord.

X

It was the night, and Lara's glassy stream
The stars are studding, each with imaged beam;
So calm, the waters scarcely seem to stray,
And yet they glide like happiness away;
Reflecting far and fairy-like from high
The immortal lights that live along the sky.
Its banks are fringed with many a goodly tree,
And flowers the fairest that may feast the bee;
Such in her chaplet infant Dian wove,
And Innocence would offer to her love.
These deck the shore; the waves their channel make
In windings bright and mazy like the snake.
All was so still, so soft in earth and air,
You scarce would start to meet a spirit there;
Secure that nought of evil could delight
To walk in such a scene, on such a night!
It was a moment only for the good:
So Lara deem'd, nor longer there he stood,
But turn'd in silence to his castle-gate.
Such scene his soul no more could contemplate;
Such scene reminded him of other days,
Of skies more cloudless, moons of purer blaze,
Of nights more soft and frequent, hearts that now —
No — no — the storm may beat upon his brow,
Unfelt, unsparing, but a night like this,
A night of beauty, mock'd such breast as his.

XI

He turn'd within his solitary hall,
And his high shadow shot along the wall.
There were the painted forms of other times,
'T was all they left of virtues or of crimes,
Save vague tradition; and the gloomy vaults
That hid their dust, their foibles, and their faults;
And half a column of the pompous page
That speeds the specious tale from age to age;
Where history's pen its praise or blame supplies,
And lies like truth, and still most truly lies.
He wandering mused, and as the moonbeam shone
Through the dim lattice o'er the floor of stone;
And the high fretted roof, and saints that there
O'er Gothic windows knelt in pictured prayer,

Reflected in fantastic figures grew,
Like life, but not like mortal life, to view;—
His bristling locks of sable, brow of gloom,
And the wide waving of his shaken plume,
Glanced like a spectre's attributes, and gave
His aspect all that terror gives the grave.

XII

'T was midnight — all was slumber; the lone light
Dimm'd in the lamp, as loth to break the night.
Hark! there be murmurs heard in Lara's hall —
A sound — a voice — a shriek — a fearful call!
A long, loud shriek — and silence; did they hear
That frantic echo burst the sleeping ear?
They heard and rose, and, tremulously brave,
Rush where the sound invoked their aid to save;
They come with half-lit tapers in their hands,
And snatch'd in startled haste unbelted brands.

XIII

Cold as the marble where his length was laid,
Pale as the beam that o'er his features play'd,
Was Lara stretch'd; his half-drawn sabre near,
Dropp'd it should seem in more than nature's fear;
Yet he was firm, or had been firm till now,
And still defiance knit his gather'd brow:
Though mix'd with terror, senseless as he lay,
There lived upon his lip the wish to slay;
Some half-form'd threat in utterance there had died,
Some imprecation of despairing pride.
His eye was almost seal'd, but not forsook
Even in its trance the gladiator's look,
That oft awake his aspect could disclose,
And now was fix'd in horrible repose.
They raise him, bear him; — hush! he breathes, he speaks,
The swarthy blush recolours in his cheeks;
His lip resumes its red; his eye, though dim,
Rolls wide and wild; each slowly quivering limb
Recalls its function; but his words are strung
In terms that seem not of his native tongue,
Distinct but strange — enough they understand
To deem them accents of another land;
And such they were, and meant to meet an ear
That hears him not — alas, that cannot hear!

XIV

His page approach'd, and he alone appear'd
To know the import of the words they heard;
And, by the changes of his cheek and brow,
They were not such as Lara should avow,
Nor he interpret, — yet with less surprise
Than those around their chieftain's state he eyes.
But Lara's prostrate form he bent beside,
And in that tongue which seem'd his own replied,
And Lara heeds those tones that gently seem
To soothe away the horrors of his dream —
If dream it were, that thus could overthrow
A breast that needed not ideal woe.

XV

Whate'er his frenzy dream'd or eye beheld, —
If yet remember'd ne'er to be reveal'd, —
Rests at his heart; the custom'd morning came,
And breathed new vigour in his shaken frame.
And solace sought he none from priest nor leech,
And soon the same in movement and in speech
As heretofore he fill'd the passing hours;
Nor less he smiles, nor more his forehead lowers,
Than these were wont; and if the coming night
Appear'd less welcome now to Lara's sight,
He to his marvelling vassals show'd it not,
Whose shuddering proved *their* fear was less forgot.
In trembling pairs (alone they dared not) crawl
The astonish'd slaves, and shun the fated hall;

The waving banner, and the clapping door,
The rustling tapestry, and the echoing floor;
The long dim shadows of surrounding trees,
The flapping bat, the night song of the breeze;
Aught they behold or hear their thought appals,
As evening saddens o'er the dark grey walls.

XVI

Vain thought! that hour of ne'er unravell'd gloom
Came not again, or Lara could assume
A seeming of forgetfulness, that made
His vassals more amazed nor less afraid —
Had memory vanish'd then with sense restored?
Since word, nor look, nor gesture of their lord
Betray'd a feeling that recall'd to these
That fever'd moment of his mind's disease.
Was it a dream? was his the voice that spoke
Those strange wild accents; his the cry that broke
Their slumber? his the oppress'd, o'er-labour'd heart
That ceased to beat, the look that made them start?
Could he who thus had suffer'd so forget,
When such as saw that suffering shudder yet?
Or did that silence prove his memory fix'd
Too deep for words, indelible, unmix'd
In that corroding secrecy which gnaws
The heart to show the effect but not the cause?
Not so in him; his breast had buried both,
Nor common gazers could discern the growth
Of thoughts that mortal lips must leave half told;
They choke the feeble words that would unfold.

XVII

In him inexplicably mix'd appear'd
Much to be loved and hated, sought and fear'd.
Opinion varying o'er his hidden lot,
In praise or railing ne'er his name forgot;
His silence form'd a theme for others' prate;
They guess'd, they gazed, they fain would know his fate.
What had he been? what was he, thus unknown,
Who walk'd their world, his lineage only known?
A hater of his kind? yet some would say,
With them he could seem gay amidst the gay;
But own'd that smile, if oft observed and near,
Waned in its mirth and wither'd to a sneer;
That smile might reach his lip but pass'd not by,
None e'er could trace its laughter to his eye.
Yet there was softness too in his regard,
At times, a heart as not by nature hard,
But once perceived, his spirit seem'd to chide
Such weakness as unworthy of its pride,
And steel'd itself, as scorning to redeem
One doubt from others' half withheld esteem;
In self-inflicted penance of a breast
Which tenderness might once have wrung from rest;
In vigilance of grief that would compel
The soul to hate for having loved too well.

XVIII

There was in him a vital scorn of all:
As if the worst had fall'n which could befall,
He stood a stranger in this breathing world,
An erring spirit from another hurl'd;
A thing of dark imaginings, that shaped
By choice the perils he by chance escaped:
But 'scaped in vain, for in their memory yet
His mind would half exult and half regret.
With more capacity for love than earth
Bestows on most of mortal mould and birth,
His early dreams of good outstripp'd the truth,
And troubled manhood follow'd baffled youth;
With thought of years in phantom chase misspent,
And wasted powers for better purpose lent;
And fiery passions that had pour'd their wrath
In hurried desolation o'er his path,

And left the better feelings all at strife
In wild reflection o'er his stormy life;
But haughty still and loth himself to blame,
He call'd on Nature's self to share the shame,
And charged all faults upon the fleshly form
She gave to clog the soul and feast the worm;
Till he at last confounded good and ill,
And half mistook for fate the acts of will.
Too high for common selfishness, he could
At times resign his own for others' good,
But not in pity, not because he ought,
But in some strange perversity of thought,
That sway'd him onward with a secret pride
To do what few or none would do beside;
And this same impulse would, in tempting time,
Mislead his spirit equally to crime;
So much he soar'd beyond, or sunk beneath,
The men with whom he felt condemn'd to breathe,
And long'd by good or ill to separate
Himself from all who shared his mortal state.
His mind abhorring this had fix'd her throne
Far from the world, in regions of her own:
Thus coldly passing all that pass'd below,
His blood in temperate seeming now would flow:
Ah! happier if it ne'er with guilt had glow'd,
But ever in that icy smoothness flow'd!
'T is true, with other men their path he walk'd,
And like the rest in seeming did and talk'd,
Nor outraged Reason's rules by flaw nor start,
His madness was not of the head, but heart;
And rarely wander'd in his speech, or drew
His thoughts so forth as to offend the view.

XIX

With all that chilling mystery of mien,
And seeming gladness to remain unseen,
He had (if 't were not nature's boon) an art
Of fixing memory on another's heart.
It was not love perchance, nor hate, nor aught
That words can image to express the thought;
But they who saw him did not see in vain,
And once beheld, would ask of him again;
And those to whom he spake remember'd well,
And on the words, however light, would dwell
None knew, nor how, nor why, but he entwined
Himself perforce around the hearer's mind;
There he was stamp'd, in liking, or in hate,
If greeted once; however brief the date
That friendship, pity, or aversion knew,
Still there within the inmost thought he grew.
You could not penetrate his soul, but found,
Despite your wonder, to your own he wound;
His presence haunted still; and from the breast
He forced an all unwilling interest:
Vain was the struggle in that mental net,
His spirit seem'd to dare you to forget!

XX

There is a festival, where knights and dames,
And aught that wealth or lofty lineage claims,
Appear — a highborn and a welcome guest
To Otho's hall came Lara with the rest.
The long carousal shakes the illumined hall,
Well speeds alike the banquet and the ball;
And the gay dance of bounding Beauty's train
Links grace and harmony in happiest chain.
Blest are the early hearts and gentle hands
That mingle there in well according bands;
It is a sight the careful brow might smooth,
And make Age smile and dream itself to youth,
And Youth forget such hour was past on earth,
So springs the exulting bosom to that mirth!

XXI

And Lara gazed on these, sedately glad,
His brow belied him if his soul was sad;
And his glance follow'd fast each fluttering fair,
Whose steps of lightness woke no echo there.
He lean'd against the lofty pillar nigh,
With folded arms and long attentive eye,
Nor mark'd a glance so sternly fix'd on his —
Ill brook'd high Lara scrutiny like this.
At length he caught it — 't is a face unknown,
But seems as searching his, and his alone;
Prying and dark, a stranger's by his mien,
Who still till now had gazed on him unseen:

At length encountering meets the mutual gaze
Of keen enquiry and of mute amaze.
On Lara's glance emotion gathering grew,
As if distrusting that the stranger threw;
Along the stranger's aspect, fix'd and stern,
Flash'd more than thence the vulgar eye could learn.

XXII

''T is he!' the stranger cried, and those that heard
Re-echo'd fast and far the whisper'd word.
''T is he!'—''T is who?' they question far and near,
Till louder accents rung on Lara's ear;
So widely spread, few bosoms well could brook
The general marvel, or that single look.
But Lara stirr'd not, changed not, the surprise
That sprung at first to his arrested eyes
Seem'd now subsided, neither sunk nor raised
Glanced his eye round, though still the stranger gazed;
And drawing nigh, exclaim'd, with haughty sneer,
''T is he!—how came he thence?—what doth he here?'

XXIII

It were too much for Lara to pass by
Such questions, so repeated fierce and high;
With look collected, but with accent cold,
More mildly firm than petulantly bold,
He turn'd, and met the inquisitorial tone—
'My name is Lara!—when thine own is known,
Doubt not my fitting answer to requite
The unlook'd for courtesy of such a knight.
'T is Lara!—further wouldst thou mark or ask?
I shun no question, and I wear no mask.'

'Thou shunn'st no question! Ponder—is there none
Thy heart must answer, though thine ear would shun?
And deem'st thou me unknown too? Gaze again!
At least thy memory was not given in vain.
Oh! never canst thou cancel half her debt,
Eternity forbids thee to forget.'
With slow and searching glance upon his face
Grew Lara's eyes, but nothing there could trace
They knew, or chose to know: with dubious look
He deign'd no answer, but his head he shook,
And half contemptuous turn'd to pass away;
But the stern stranger motion'd him to stay.
'A word!—I charge thee stay, and answer here
To one, who, wert thou noble, were thy peer;
But as thou wast and art—nay, frown not, lord,
If false, 't is easy to disprove the word—
But as thou wast and art, on thee looks down,
Distrusts thy smiles, but shakes not at thy frown.
Art thou not he? whose deeds——'
'Whate'er I be,
Words wild as these, accusers like to thee,
I list no further; those with whom they weigh
May hear the rest, nor venture to gainsay
The wondrous tale no doubt thy tongue can tell,
Which thus begins so courteously and well.
Let Otho cherish here his polish'd guest,
To him my thanks and thoughts shall be express'd.'
And here their wondering host hath interposed:
'Whate'er there be between you undisclosed,
This is no time nor fitting place to mar
The mirthful meeting with a wordy war.
If thou, Sir Ezzelin, hast aught to show
Which it befits Count Lara's ear to know,
To-morrow, here or elsewhere, as may best
Beseem your mutual judgment, speak the rest;
I pledge myself for thee, as not unknown,
Though, like Count Lara, now return'd alone
From other lands, almost a stranger grown;
And if from Lara's blood and gentle birth
I augur right of courage and of worth,
He will not that untainted line belie,
Nor aught that knighthood may accord, deny.'

'To-morrow be it,' Ezzelin replied,
'And here our several worth and truth be tried;
I gage my life, my falchion to attest
My words, so may I mingle with the blest!'
What answers Lara? to its centre shrunk
His soul, in deep abstraction sudden sunk;
The words of many, and the eyes of all
That there were gather'd, seem'd on him to fall;
But his were silent, his appear'd to stray
In far forgetfulness away — away —
Alas! that heedlessness of all around
Bespoke remembrance only too profound.

XXIV

'To-morrow! — ay, to-morrow!' further word
Than those repeated none from Lara heard;
Upon his brow no outward passion spoke;
From his large eye no flashing anger broke;
Yet there was something fix'd in that low tone,
Which show'd resolve, determined, though unknown.
He seized his cloak, his head he slightly bow'd,
And passing Ezzelin, he left the crowd;
And, as he pass'd him, smiling met the frown
With which that chieftain's brow would bear him down:
It was nor smile of mirth, nor struggling pride
That curbs to scorn the wrath it cannot hide;
But that of one in his own heart secure
Of all that he would do, or could endure.
Could this mean peace? the calmness of the good?
Or guilt grown old in desperate hardihood?
Alas! too like in confidence are each,
For man to trust to mortal look or speech;
From deeds, and deeds alone, may he discern
Truths which it wrings the unpractised heart to learn.

XXV

And Lara call'd his page, and went his way —
Well could that stripling word or sign obey:
His only follower from those climes afar,
Where the soul glows beneath a brighter star
(For Lara left the shore from whence he sprung),
In duty patient, and sedate though young;
Silent as him he served, his faith appears
Above his station, and beyond his years.
Though not unknown the tongue of Lara's land,
In such from him he rarely heard command;
But fleet his step, and clear his tones would come,
When Lara's lip breathed forth the words of home:
Those accents, as his native mountains dear,
Awake their absent echoes in his ear,
Friends', kindred's, parents', wonted voice recall,
Now lost, abjured, for one — his friend, his all:
For him earth now disclosed no other guide;
What marvel then he rarely left his side?

XXVI

Light was his form, and darkly delicate
That brow whereon his native sun had sate,
But had not marr'd (though in his beams he grew)
The cheek where oft the unbidden blush shone through;
Yet not such blush as mounts when health would show
All the heart's hue in that delighted glow;
But 't was a hectic tint of secret care
That for a burning moment fever'd there;
And the wild sparkle of his eye seem'd caught
From high, and lighten'd with electric thought,
Though its black orb those long low lashes' fringe
Had temper'd with a melancholy tinge;
Yet less of sorrow than of pride was there,
Or, if 't were grief, a grief that none should share.
And pleased not him the sports that please his age,
The tricks of youth, the frolics of the page;
For hours on Lara he would fix his glance,
As all-forgotten in that watchful trance;
And from his chief withdrawn, he wander'd lone,
Brief were his answers, and his questions none;

His walk the wood, his sport some foreign book,
His resting-place the bank that curbs the brook.
He seem'd, like him he served, to live apart
From all that lures the eye and fills the heart;
To know no brotherhood, and take from earth
No gift beyond that bitter boon — our birth.

XXVII

If aught he loved, 't was Lara; but was shown
His faith in reverence and in deeds alone,
In mute attention, and his care, which guess'd
Each wish, fulfill'd it ere the tongue express'd.
Still there was haughtiness in all he did,
A spirit deep that brook'd not to be chid;
His zeal, though more than that of servile hands,
In act alone obeys, his air commands;
As if 't was Lara's less than *his* desire
That thus he served, but surely not for hire.
Slight were the tasks enjoin'd him by his lord,
To hold the stirrup, or to bear the sword;
To tune his lute, or, if he will'd it more,
On tomes of other times and tongues to pore;
But ne'er to mingle with the menial train,
To whom he show'd nor deference nor disdain,
But that well-worn reserve which proved he knew
No sympathy with that familiar crew:
His soul, whate'er his station or his stem,
Could bow to Lara, not descend to them.
Of higher birth he seem'd, and better days,
Nor mark of vulgar toil that hand betrays,
So femininely white it might bespeak
Another sex, when match'd with that smooth cheek,
But for his garb, and something in his gaze,
More wild and high than woman's eye betrays;
A latent fierceness that far more became
His fiery climate than his tender frame:
True, in his words it broke not from his breast,
But from his aspect might be more than guess'd.
Kaled his name, though rumour said he bore
Another ere he left his mountain-shore;
For sometimes he would hear, however nigh,
That name repeated loud without reply,
As unfamiliar, or, if roused again,
Start to the sound, as but remember'd then;
Unless 't was Lara's wonted voice that spake,
For then, ear, eyes, and heart would all awake.

XXVIII

He had look'd down upon the festive hall,
And mark'd that sudden strife so mark'd of all;
And when the crowd around and near him told
Their wonder at the calmness of the bold,
Their marvel how the high-born Lara bore
Such insult from a stranger, doubly sore,
The colour of young Kaled went and came,
The lip of ashes, and the cheek of flame;
And o'er his brow the dampening heart-drops threw
The sickening iciness of that cold dew,
That rises as the busy bosom sinks
With heavy thoughts from which reflection shrinks.
Yes — there be things which we must dream and dare,
And execute ere thought be half aware:
Whate'er might Kaled's be, it was enow
To seal his lip, but agonise his brow.
He gazed on Ezzelin till Lara cast
That sidelong smile upon the knight he past;
When Kaled saw that smile his visage fell,
As if on something recognised right well;
His memory read in such a meaning more
Than Lara's aspect unto others wore.
Forward he sprung — a moment, both were gone,
And all within that hall seem'd left alone;
Each had so fix'd his eye on Lara's mien,
All had so mix'd their feelings with that scene,
That when his long dark shadow through the porch
No more relieves the glare of yon high torch,
Each pulse beats quicker, and all bosoms seem
To bound as doubting from too black a dream,

Such as we know is false, yet dread in sooth,
Because the worst is ever nearest truth.
And they are gone — but Ezzelin is there,
With thoughtful visage and imperious air;
But long remain'd not; ere an hour expired
He waved his hand to Otho, and retired.

XXIX

The crowd are gone, the revellers at rest;
The courteous host, and all-approving guest,
Again to that accustom'd couch must creep
Where joy subsides, and sorrow sighs to sleep, 631
And man, o'erlaboured with his being's strife,
Shrinks to that sweet forgetfulness of life.
There lie love's feverish hope, and cunning's guile,
Hate's working brain, and lull'd ambition's wile;
O'er each vain eye oblivion's pinions wave,
And quench'd existence crouches in a grave.
What better name may slumber's bed become?
Night's sepulchre, the universal home,
Where weakness, strength, vice, virtue, sunk supine, 640
Alike in naked helplessness recline;
Glad for awhile to heave unconscious breath,
Yet wake to wrestle with the dread of death,
And shun, though day but dawn on ills increased,
That sleep, the loveliest, since it dreams the least.

CANTO THE SECOND

I

Night wanes, the vapours round the mountains curl'd
Melt into morn, and Light awakes the world.
Man has another day to swell the past,
And lead him near to little, but his last;
But mighty Nature bounds as from her birth,
The sun is in the heavens, and life on earth;
Flowers in the valley, splendour in the beam,
Health on the gale, and freshness in the stream.
Immortal man! behold her glories shine,
And cry, exulting inly, 'They are thine!'
Gaze on, while yet thy gladden'd eye may see; 11
A morrow comes when they are not for thee:
And grieve what may above thy senseless bier,
Nor earth nor sky will yield a single tear;
Nor cloud shall gather more, nor leaf shall fall,
Nor gale breathe forth one sigh for thee, for all;
But creeping things shall revel in their spoil,
And fit thy clay to fertilise the soil.

II

'T is morn — 't is noon; assembled in the hall
The gather'd chieftains come to Otho's call. 20
'T is now the promised hour, that must proclaim
The life or death of Lara's future fame;
When Ezzelin his charge may here unfold,
And whatsoe'er the tale, it must be told.
His faith was pledged, and Lara's promise given,
To meet it in the eye of man and heaven.
Why comes he not? Such truths to be divulged,
Methinks the accuser's rest is long indulged.

III

The hour is past, and Lara too is there,
With self-confiding, coldly patient air; 30
Why comes not Ezzelin? The hour is past,
And murmurs rise, and Otho's brow 's o'ercast.
'I know my friend! his faith I cannot fear,
If yet he be on earth, expect him here;
The roof that held him in the valley stands
Between my own and noble Lara's lands;
My halls from such a guest had honour gain'd,
Nor had Sir Ezzelin his host disdain'd,
But that some previous proof forbade his stay, 39
And urged him to prepare against to-day.
The word I pledged for his I pledge again,
Or will myself redeem his knighthood's stain.'
He ceased; and Lara answer'd, 'I am here
To lend at thy demand a listening ear

To tales of evil from a stranger's tongue,
Whose words already might my heart have wrung,
But that I deem'd him scarcely less than mad,
Or, at the worst, a foe ignobly bad.
I know him not — but me it seems he knew
In lands where, but I must not trifle too:
Produce this babbler — or redeem the pledge,
Here in thy hold, and with thy falchion's edge.'

Proud Otho, on the instant reddening, threw
His glove on earth, and forth his sabre flew:
'The last alternative befits me best,
And thus I answer for mine absent guest.'

With cheek unchanging from its sallow gloom,
However near his own or other's tomb;
With hand, whose almost careless coolness spoke
Its grasp well-used to deal the sabre-stroke;
With eye, though calm, determined not to spare,
Did Lara too his willing weapon bare.
In vain the circling chieftains round them closed,
For Otho's frenzy would not be opposed;
And from his lip those words of insult fell —
His sword is good who can maintain them well.

IV

Short was the conflict; furious, blindly rash,
Vain Otho gave his bosom to the gash:
He bled, and fell; but not with deadly wound,
Stretch'd by a dextrous sleight along the ground.
'Demand thy life!' He answer'd not: and then
From that red floor he ne'er had risen again,
For Lara's brow upon the moment grew
Almost to blackness in its demon hue;
And fiercer shook his angry falchion now
Than when his foe's was levell'd at his brow;
Then all was stern collectedness and art,
Now rose the unleaven'd hatred of his heart;
So little sparing to the foe he fell'd,
That when the approaching crowd his arm withheld,
He almost turn'd the thirsty point on those
Who thus for mercy dared to interpose:
But to a moment's thought that purpose bent;
Yet look'd he on him still with eye intent,
As if he loathed the ineffectual strife
That left a foe, howe'er o'erthrown, with life;
As if to search how far the wound he gave
Had sent its victim onward to his grave.

V

They raised the bleeding Otho, and the Leech
Forbade all present question, sign, and speech;
The others met within a neighbouring hall,
And he, incensed and heedless of them all,
The cause and conqueror in this sudden fray,
In haughty silence slowly strode away:
He back'd his steed, his homeward path he took,
Nor cast on Otho's towers a single look.

VI

But where was he, that meteor of a night,
Who menaced but to disappear with light?
Where was this Ezzelin, who came and went
To leave no other trace of his intent?
He left the dome of Otho, long ere morn,
In darkness, yet so well the path was worn
He could not miss it: near his dwelling lay;
But there he was not, and with coming day
Came fast enquiry, which unfolded nought
Except the absence of the chief it sought.
A chamber tenantless, a steed at rest,
His host alarm'd, his murmuring squires distress'd:
Their search extends along, around, the path,
In dread to meet the marks of prowlers' wrath:
But none are there, and not a brake hath borne
Nor gout of blood, nor shred of mantle torn;
Nor fall nor struggle hath defaced the grass,
Which still retains a mark where murder was:

Nor dabbling fingers left to tell the tale,
The bitter print of each convulsive nail,
When agonizèd hands that cease to guard,
Wound in that pang the smoothness of the sward.
Some such had been, if here a life was reft,
But these were not; and doubting hope is left.
And strange suspicion, whispering Lara's name,
Now daily mutters o'er his blacken'd fame;
Then, sudden silent when his form appear'd,
Awaits the absence of the thing it fear'd,
Again its wonted wondering to renew,
And dye conjecture with a darker hue.

VII

Days roll along, and Otho's wounds are heal'd,
But not his pride, and hate no more conceal'd.
He was a man of power, and Lara's foe,
The friend of all who sought to work him woe,
And from his country's justice now demands
Account of Ezzelin at Lara's hands.
Who else than Lara could have cause to fear
His presence? who had made him disappear,
If not the man on whom his menaced charge
Had sate too deeply were he left at large?
The general rumour ignorantly loud,
The mystery dearest to the curious crowd;
The seeming friendlessness of him who strove
To win no confidence, and wake no love;
The sweeping fierceness which his soul betray'd,
The skill with which he wielded his keen blade;
Where had his arm unwarlike caught that art?
Where had that fierceness grown upon his heart?
For it was not the blind capricious rage
A word can kindle and a word assuage;
But the deep working of a soul unmix'd
With aught of pity where its wrath had fix'd;
Such as long power and overgorged success
Concentrates into all that 's merciless.
These, link'd with that desire which ever sways
Mankind, the rather to condemn than praise,
'Gainst Lara gathering raised at length a storm,
Such as himself might fear, and foes would form,
And he must answer for the absent head
Of one that haunts him still, alive or dead.

VIII

Within that land was many a malcontent,
Who cursed the tyranny to which he bent;
That soil full many a wringing despot saw,
Who work'd his wantonness in form of law.
Long war without and frequent broil within
Had made a path for blood and giant sin,
That waited but a signal to begin
New havoc, such as civil discord blends,
Which knows no neuter, owns but foes or friends;
Fix'd in his feudal fortress each was lord,
In word and deed obey'd, in soul abhorr'd.
Thus Lara had inherited his lands,
And with them pining hearts and sluggish hands;
But that long absence from his native clime
Had left him stainless of oppression's crime,
And now, diverted by his milder sway,
All dread by slow degrees had worn away.
The menials felt their usual awe alone,
But more for him than them that fear was grown;
They deem'd him now unhappy, though at first
Their evil judgment augur'd of the worst,
And each long restless night and silent mood
Was traced to sickness, fed by solitude.
And though his lonely habits threw of late
Gloom o'er his chamber, cheerful was his gate;
For thence the wretched ne'er unsoothed withdrew,
For them, at least, his soul compassion knew.
Cold to the great, contemptuous to the high,
The humble pass'd not his unheeding eye;
Much he would speak not, but beneath his roof
They found asylum oft and ne'er reproof.
And they who watch'd might mark that, day by day,
Some new retainers gather'd to his sway.
But most of late, since Ezzelin was lost,
He play'd the courteous lord and bounteous host:

Perchance his strife with Otho made him dread
Some snare prepared for his obnoxious head;
Whate'er his view, his favour more obtains
With these, the people, than his fellow thanes.
If this were policy, so far 't was sound,
The million judged but of him as they found;
From him by sterner chiefs to exile driven
They but required a shelter, and 't was given.
By him no peasant mourn'd his rifled cot,
And scarce the Serf could murmur o'er his lot;
With him old avarice found its hoard secure,
With him contempt forbore to mock the poor;
Youth present cheer and promised recompense
Detain'd, till all too late to part from thence.
To hate he offer'd, with the coming change,
The deep reversion of delay'd revenge;
To love, long baffled by the unequal match,
The well-worn charms success was sure to snatch.
All now was ripe, he waits but to proclaim
That slavery nothing which was still a name.
The moment came, the hour when Otho thought
Secure at last the vengeance which he sought.
His summons found the destined criminal
Begirt by thousands in his swarming hall,
Fresh from their feudal fetters newly riven,
Defying earth and confident of heaven.
That morning he had freed the soil-bound slaves
Who dig no land for tyrants but their graves!
Such is their cry — some watchword for the fight
Must vindicate the wrong and warp the right;
Religion, freedom, vengeance, what you will —
A word 's enough to raise mankind to kill;
Some factious phrase by cunning caught and spread,
That guilt may reign, and wolves and worms be fed!

IX

Throughout that clime the feudal chiefs had gain'd
Such sway, their infant monarch hardly reign'd.
Now was the hour for faction's rebel growth,
The Serfs contemn'd the one, and hated both:
They waited but a leader, and they found
One to their cause inseparably bound,
By circumstance compell'd to plunge again,
In self-defence, amidst the strife of men.
Cut off by some mysterious fate from those
Whom birth and nature meant not for his foes,
Had Lara from that night, to him accurst,
Prepared to meet, but not alone, the worst.
Some reason urged, whate'er it was, to shun
Enquiry into deeds at distance done;
By mingling with his own the cause of all,
E'en if he fail'd, he still delay'd his fall.
The sullen calm that long his bosom kept,
The storm that once had spent itself and slept,
Roused by events that seem'd foredoom'd to urge
His gloomy fortunes to their utmost verge,
Burst forth, and made him all he once had been,
And is again; he only changed the scene.
Light care had he for life, and less for fame,
But not less fitted for the desperate game:
He deem'd himself mark'd out for others' hate,
And mock'd at ruin so they shared his fate.
What cared he for the freedom of the crowd?
He raised the humble but to bend the proud.
He had hoped quiet in his sullen lair,
But man and destiny beset him there:
Inured to hunters, he was found at bay;
And they must kill, they cannot snare the prey.
Stern, unambitious, silent, he had been
Henceforth a calm spectator of life's scene;
But dragg'd again upon the arena, stood
A leader not unequal to the feud;
In voice, mien, gesture, savage nature spoke,
And from his eye the gladiator broke.

X

What boots the oft-repeated tale of strife,
The feast of vultures, and the waste of life?
The varying fortune of each separate field,
The fierce that vanquish, and the faint that yield?
The smoking ruin, and the crumbled wall?
In this the struggle was the same with all;
Save that distemper'd passions lent their force
In bitterness that banish'd all remorse.
None sued, for Mercy knew her cry was vain,
The captive died upon the battle-plain.
In either cause, one rage alone possess'd
The empire of the alternate victor's breast;
And they that smote for freedom or for sway,
Deem'd few were slain, while more remain'd to slay.
It was too late to check the wasting brand,
And Desolation reap'd the famish'd land;
The torch was lighted, and the flame was spread,
And Carnage smiled upon her daily dead.

XI

Fresh with the nerve the new-born impulse strung,
The first success to Lara's numbers clung:
But that vain victory hath ruined all;
They form no longer to their leader's call:
In blind confusion on the foe they press,
And think to snatch is to secure success.
The lust of booty and the thirst of hate
Lure on the broken brigands to their fate:
In vain he doth whate'er a chief may do,
To check the headlong fury of that crew;
In vain their stubborn ardour he would tame,
The hand that kindles cannot quench the flame;
The wary foe alone hath turn'd their mood,
And shown their rashness to that erring brood.
The feign'd retreat, the nightly ambuscade,
The daily harass, and the fight delay'd,
The long privation of the hoped supply,
The tentless rest beneath the humid sky,
The stubborn wall that mocks the leaguer's art
And palls the patience of his baffled heart, —
Of these they had not deem'd: the battle-day
They could encounter as a veteran may;
But more preferr'd the fury of the strife,
And present death, to hourly suffering life.
And famine wrings, and fever sweeps away
His numbers melting fast from their array;
Intemperate triumph fades to discontent,
And Lara's soul alone seems still unbent.
But few remain to aid his voice and hand,
And thousands dwindled to a scanty band:
Desperate, though few, the last and best remain'd
To mourn the discipline they late disdain'd.
One hope survives, the frontier is not far,
And thence they may escape from native war;
And bear within them to the neighbouring state
An exile's sorrows or an outlaw's hate:
Hard is the task their father-land to quit,
But harder still to perish or submit.

XII

It is resolved, they march — consenting Night
Guides with her star their dim and torchless flight.
Already they perceive its tranquil beam
Sleep on the surface of the barrier stream;
Already they descry — is yon the bank?
Away! 't is lined with many a hostile rank.
Return or fly! — What glitters in the rear?
'T is Otho's banner, the pursuer's spear!
Are those the shepherds' fires upon the height?
Alas! they blaze too widely for the flight:
Cut off from hope, and compass'd in the toil,
Less blood perchance hath bought a richer spoil!

XIII

A moment's pause — 't is but to breathe their band,
Or shall they onward press, or here withstand?
It matters little; if they charge the foes
Who by their border-stream their march oppose,
Some few, perchance, may break and pass the line,
However link'd to baffle such design.
'The charge be ours! to wait for their assault
Were fate well worthy of a coward's halt.'

Forth flies each sabre, rein'd is every steed,
And the next word shall scarce outstrip the deed:
In the next tone of Lara's gathering breath
How many shall but hear the voice of death!

XIV

His blade is bared, — in him there is an air
As deep, but far too tranquil for despair;
A something of indifference more than then
Becomes the bravest, if they feel for men.
He turn'd his eye on Kaled, ever near,
And still too faithful to betray one fear;
Perchance 't was but the moon's dim twilight threw
Along his aspect an unwonted hue
Of mournful paleness, whose deep tint express'd
The truth, and not the terror of his breast.
This Lara mark'd, and laid his hand on his:
It trembled not in such an hour as this;
His lip was silent, scarcely beat his heart,
His eye alone proclaim'd, 'We will not part!
Thy band may perish, or thy friends may flee,
Farewell to life, but not adieu to thee!'

The word hath pass'd his lips, and onward driven,
Pours the link'd band through ranks asunder riven;
Well has each steed obey'd the armed heel,
And flash the scimitars, and rings the steel;
Outnumber'd, not outbraved, they still oppose
Despair to daring, and a front to foes;
And blood is mingled with the dashing stream,
Which runs all redly till the morning beam.

XV

Commanding, aiding, animating all,
Where foe appear'd to press, or friend to fall,
Cheers Lara's voice, and waves or strikes his steel,
Inspiring hope himself had ceased to feel.
None fled, for well they knew that flight were vain;
But those that waver turn to smite again,
While yet they find the firmest of the foe
Recoil before their leader's look and blow.
Now girt with numbers, now almost alone,
He foils their ranks, or re-unites his own;
Himself he spared not — once they seem'd to fly —
Now was the time, he waved his hand on high,
And shook — Why sudden droops that plumèd crest?
The shaft is sped, the arrow 's in his breast!
That fatal gesture left the unguarded side,
And Death hath stricken down yon arm of pride.
The word of triumph fainted from his tongue;
That hand, so raised, how droopingly it hung!
But yet the sword instinctively retains,
Though from its fellow shrink the falling reins;
These Kaled snatches: dizzy with the blow,
And senseless bending o'er his saddle-bow,
Perceives not Lara that his anxious page
Beguiles his charger from the combat's rage.
Meantime his followers charge, and charge again;
Too mix'd the slayers now to heed the slain!

XVI

Day glimmers on the dying and the dead,
The cloven cuirass, and the helmless head.
The war-horse masterless is on the earth,
And that last gasp hath burst his bloody girth;
And near, yet quivering with what life remain'd,
The heel that urged him and the hand that rein'd;
And some too near that rolling torrent lie,
Whose waters mock the lip of those that die;
That panting thirst which scorches in the breath
Of those that die the soldier's fiery death,
In vain impels the burning mouth to crave
One drop — the last — to cool it for the grave;
With feeble and convulsive effort swept,
Their limbs along the crimson'd turf have crept;
The faint remains of life such struggles waste,
But yet they reach the stream, and bend to taste:
They feel its freshness, and almost partake —
Why pause? No further thirst have they to slake —

It is unquench'd, and yet they feel it not;
It was an agony — but now forgot!

XVII

Beneath a lime, remoter from the scene,
Where but for him that strife had never been,
A breathing but devoted warrior lay:
'T was Lara bleeding fast from life away.
His follower once, and now his only guide,
Kneels Kaled watchful o'er his welling side,
And with his scarf would stanch the tides that rush,
With each convulsion, in a blacker gush;
And then, as his faint breathing waxes low,
In feebler, not less fatal tricklings flow:
He scarce can speak, but motions him 't is vain,
And merely adds another throb to pain.
He clasps the hand that pang which would assuage,
And sadly smiles his thanks to that dark page,
Who nothing fears, nor feels, nor heeds, nor sees,
Save that damp brow which rests upon his knees;
Save that pale aspect, where the eye, though dim,
Held all the light that shone on earth for him.

XVIII

The foe arrives, who long had search'd the field,
Their triumph nought till Lara too should yield.
They would remove him, but they see 't were vain;
And he regards them with a calm disdain,
That rose to reconcile him with his fate
And that escape to death from living hate.
And Otho comes, and leaping from his steed,
Looks on the bleeding foe that made him bleed,
And questions of his state; he answers not,
Scarce glances on him as on one forgot,
And turns to Kaled: — each remaining word
They understood not, if distinctly heard;
His dying tones are in that other tongue,
To which some strange remembrance wildly clung.
They spake of other scenes, but what — is known
To Kaled, whom their meaning reach'd alone;
And he replied, though faintly, to their sound,
While gazed the rest in dumb amazement round.
They seem'd even then, that twain, unto the last
To half forget the present in the past;
To share between themselves some separate fate,
Whose darkness none beside should penetrate.

XIX

Their words though faint were many — from the tone
Their import those who heard could judge alone;
From this, you might have deem'd young Kaled's death
More near than Lara's by his voice and breath,
So sad, so deep, and hesitating broke
The accents his scarce-moving pale lips spoke;
But Lara's voice, though low, at first was clear
And calm, till murmuring death gasp'd hoarsely near.
But from his visage little could we guess,
So unrepentant, dark, and passionless,
Save that when struggling nearer to his last,
Upon that page his eye was kindly cast;
And once, as Kaled's answering accents ceased,
Rose Lara's hand, and pointed to the East,
Whether (as then the breaking sun from high
Roll'd back the clouds) the morrow caught his eye,
Or that 't was chance, or some remember'd scene,
That raised his arm to point where such had been,
Scarce Kaled seem'd to know, but turn'd away,
As if his heart abhorr'd that coming day,
And shrunk his glance before that morning light,
To look on Lara's brow — where all grew night.

Yet sense seem'd left, though better were its loss;
For when one near display'd the absolving cross,
And proffer'd to his touch the holy bead,
Of which his parting soul might own the need,
He look'd upon it with an eye profane,
And smiled — Heaven pardon! if 't were with disdain.
And Kaled, though he spoke not, nor withdrew
From Lara's face his fix'd despairing view,
With brow repulsive, and with gesture swift,
Flung back the hand which held the sacred gift,
As if such but disturb'd the expiring man,
Nor seem'd to know his life but *then* began;
That life of Immortality, secure
To none, save them whose faith in Christ is sure.

XX

But gasping heaved the breath that Lara drew,
And dull the film along his dim eye grew;
His limbs stretch'd fluttering, and his head droop'd o'er
The weak yet still untiring knee that bore;
He press'd the hand he held upon his heart—
It beats no more, but Kaled will not part
With the cold grasp, but feels, and feels in vain,
For that faint throb which answers not again.
'It beats!' — Away, thou dreamer! he is gone —
It once was Lara which thou look'st upon.

XXI

He gazed, as if not yet had pass'd away
The haughty spirit of that humble clay;
And those around have roused him from his trance,
But cannot tear from thence his fixèd glance;
And when, in raising him from where he bore
Within his arms the form that felt no more,
He saw the head his breast would still sustain,
Roll down like earth to earth upon the plain;
He did not dash himself thereby, nor tear
The glossy tendrils of his raven hair,
But strove to stand and gaze, but reel'd and fell,
Scarce breathing more than that he loved so well; —
Than that *he* loved! Oh! never yet beneath
The breast of man such trusty love may breathe!
That trying moment hath at once reveal'd
The secret long and yet but half conceal'd;
In baring to revive that lifeless breast,
Its grief seem'd ended, but the sex confess'd;
And life return'd, and Kaled felt no shame —
What now to her was Womanhood or Fame?

XXII

And Lara sleeps not where his fathers sleep,
But where he died his grave was dug as deep;
Nor is his mortal slumber less profound,
Though priest nor bless'd, nor marble deck'd the mound;
And he was mourn'd by one whose quiet grief,
Less loud, outlasts a people's for their chief.
Vain was all question ask'd her of the past,
And vain e'en menace — silent to the last;
She told nor whence, nor why she left behind
Her all for one who seem'd but little kind.
Why did she love him? Curious fool! — be still —
Is human love the growth of human will?
To her he might be gentleness; the stern
Have deeper thoughts than your dull eyes discern,
And when they love, your smilers guess not how
Beats the strong heart, though less the lips avow.
They were not common links, that form'd the chain
That bound to Lara Kaled's heart and brain;
But that wild tale she brook'd not to unfold,
And seal'd is now each lip that could have told.

XXIII

They laid him in the earth, and on his breast,
Besides the wound that sent his soul to rest,
They found the scatter'd dints of many a scar,
Which were not planted there in recent war.
Where'er had pass'd his summer years of life,
It seems they vanish'd in a land of strife;
But all unknown his glory or his guilt,
These only told that somewhere blood was spilt,
And Ezzelin, who might have spoke the past,
Return'd no more — that night appear'd his last.

XXIV

Upon that night (a peasant's is the tale)
A Serf that cross'd the intervening vale,
When Cynthia's light almost gave way to morn
And nearly veil'd in mist her waning horn, —
A Serf, that rose betimes to thread the wood,
And hew the bough that bought his children's food,
Pass'd by the river that divides the plain
Of Otho's lands and Lara's broad domain.
He heard a tramp — a horse and horseman broke
From out the wood — before him was a cloak
Wrapt round some burthen at his saddle-bow,
Bent was his head, and hidden was his brow.
Roused by the sudden sight at such a time,
And some foreboding that it might be crime,
Himself unheeded watch'd the stranger's course,
Who reach'd the river, bounded from his horse,
And lifting thence the burthen which he bore,
Heaved up the bank, and dash'd it from the shore,
Then paused, and look'd, and turn'd, and seem'd to watch,
And still another hurried glance would snatch,
And follow with his step the stream that flow'd,
As if even yet too much its surface show'd.
At once he started, stoop'd, around him strown
The winter floods had scatter'd heaps of stone;
Of these the heaviest thence he gather'd there,
And slung them with a more than common care.
Meantime the Serf had crept to where unseen
Himself might safely mark what this might mean;
He caught a glimpse, as of a floating breast,
And something glitter'd starlike on the vest;
But ere he well could mark the buoyant trunk,
A massy fragment smote it, and it sunk:
It rose again, but indistinct to view,
And left the waters of a purple hue,
Then deeply disappear'd. The horseman gazed
Till ebb'd the latest eddy it had raised;
Then turning, vaulted on his pawing steed,
And instant spurr'd him into panting speed.
His face was mask'd — the features of the dead,
If dead it were, escaped the observer's dread;
But if in sooth a star its bosom bore,
Such is the badge that knighthood ever wore,
And such 't is known Sir Ezzelin had worn
Upon the night that led to such a morn.
If thus he perish'd, Heaven receive his soul!
His undiscover'd limbs to ocean roll;
And charity upon the hope would dwell
It was not Lara's hand by which he fell.

XXV

And Kaled — Lara — Ezzelin, are gone,
Alike without their monumental stone!
The first, all efforts vainly strove to wean
From lingering where her chieftain's blood had been.
Grief had so tamed a spirit once too proud,
Her tears were few, her wailing never loud;
But furious would you tear her from the spot
Where yet she scarce believed that he was not,
Her eye shot forth with all the living fire

That haunts the tigress in her whelpless ire;
But left to waste her weary moments there,
She talk'd all idly unto shapes of air,
Such as the busy brain of Sorrow paints,
And woos to listen to her fond complaints.
And she would sit beneath the very tree
Where lay his drooping head upon her knee;
And in that posture where she saw him fall,
His words, his looks, his dying grasp recall;
And she had shorn, but saved her raven hair,
And oft would snatch it from her bosom there,
And fold, and press it gently to the ground,
As if she stanch'd anew some phantom's wound.
Herself would question, and for him reply;
Then rising, start, and beckon him to fly
From some imagined spectre in pursuit;
Then seat her down upon some linden's root,
And hide her visage with her meagre hand,
Or trace strange characters along the sand:—
This could not last—she lies by him she loved,
Her tale untold, her truth too dearly proved.

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

TO
JOHN HOBHOUSE, ESQ.
THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED
BY HIS
FRIEND.
January 22, 1816.

ADVERTISEMENT

'The grand army of the Turks (in 1715), under the Prime Vizier, to open to themselves a way into the heart of the Morea, and to form the siege of Napoli di Romania, the most considerable place in all that country, thought it best in the first place to attack Corinth, upon which they made several storms. The garrison being weakened, and the governor seeing it was impossible to hold out against so mighty a force, thought it fit to beat a parley: but while they were treating about the articles, one of the magazines in the Turkish camp, wherein they had six hundred barrels of powder, blew up by accident, whereby six or seven hundred men were killed; which so enraged the infidels, that they would not grant any capitulation, but stormed the place with so much fury, that they took it, and put most of the garrison, with Signior Minotti, the governor, to the sword. The rest, with Antonio Bembo, proveditor extraordinary, were made prisoners of war.'—*History of the Turks*, vol. iii. p. 151.

In the year since Jesus died for men,
Eighteen hundred years and ten,
We were a gallant company,
Riding o'er land and sailing o'er sea.
Oh, but we went merrily!
We forded the river, and clomb the high hill,
Never our steeds for a day stood still;
Whether we lay in the cave or the shed,
Our sleep fell soft on the hardest bed;
Whether we couch'd in our rough capote,
On the rougher plank of our gliding boat,
Or stretch'd on the beach, or our saddles spread
As a pillow beneath the resting head,
Fresh we woke upon the morrow.
All our thoughts and words had scope,
We had health, and we had hope,
Toil and travel, but no sorrow.
We were of all tongues and creeds;—
Some were those who counted beads,
Some of mosque, and some of church,
And some, or I mis-say, of neither;
Yet through the wide world might ye search,
Nor find a motlier crew nor blither.

But some are dead, and some are gone,
And some are scatter'd and alone,
And some are rebels on the hills
That look along Epirus' valleys,
Where freedom still at moments rallies
And pays in blood oppression's ills;
And some are in a far countree,
And some all restlessly at home;
But never more, oh, never, we
Shall meet to revel and to roam.

But those hardy days flew cheerily,
And when they now fall drearily,
My thoughts, like swallows, skim the main,
And bear my spirit back again
Over the earth, and through the air,
A wild bird and a wanderer.
'T is this that ever wakes my strain,
And oft, too oft, implores again

The few who may endure my lay,
To follow me so far away.
Stranger, wilt thou follow now,
And sit with me on Acro-Corinth's brow?

I

Many a vanish'd year and age,
And tempest's breath, and battle's rage,
Have swept o'er Corinth; yet she stands,
A fortress form'd to Freedom's hands.
The whirlwind's wrath, the earthquake's shock,
Have left untouch'd her hoary rock,
The keystone of a land, which still,
Though fall'n, looks proudly on that hill,
The landmark to the double tide
That purpling rolls on either side,
As if their waters chafed to meet,
Yet pause and crouch beneath her feet.
But could the blood before her shed
Since first Timoleon's brother bled,
Or baffled Persia's despot fled,
Arise from out the earth which drank
The stream of slaughter as it sank,
That sanguine ocean would o'erflow
Her isthmus idly spread below:
Or could the bones of all the slain,
Who perish'd there, be piled again,
That rival pyramid would rise
More mountain-like, through those clear skies,
Than yon tower-capp'd Acropolis
Which seems the very clouds to kiss.

II

On dun Cithæron's ridge appears
The gleam of twice ten thousand spears;
And downward to the Isthmian plain,
From shore to shore of either main,
The tent is pitch'd, the crescent shines
Along the Moslem's leaguering lines;
And the dusk Spahi's bands advance
Beneath each bearded pacha's glance;
And far and wide as eye can reach
The turban'd cohorts throng the beach;
And there the Arab's camel kneels,
And there his steed the Tartar wheels;
The Turcoman hath left his herd,
The sabre round his loins to gird;
And there the volleying thunders pour
Till waves grow smoother to the roar.
The trench is dug, the cannon's breath
Wings the far hissing globe of death;
Fast whirl the fragments from the wall,
Which crumbles with the ponderous ball;
And from that wall the foe replies,
O'er dusty plain and smoky skies,
With fires that answer fast and well
The summons of the Infidel.

III

But near and nearest to the wall
Of those who wish and work its fall,
With deeper skill in war's black art
Than Othman's sons, and high of heart
As any chief that ever stood
Triumphant in the fields of blood;
From post to post, and deed to deed,
Fast spurring on his reeking steed,
Where sallying ranks the trench assail
And make the foremost Moslem quail;
Or where the battery, guarded well,
Remains as yet impregnable,
Alighting cheerly to inspire
The soldier slackening in his fire;
The first and freshest of the host
Which Stamboul's sultan there can boast,
To guide the follower o'er the field,
To point the tube, the lance to wield,
Or whirl around the bickering blade;—
Was Alp, the Adrian renegade!

IV

From Venice — once a race of worth
His gentle sires — he drew his birth;
But late an exile from her shore,
Against his countrymen he bore
The arms they taught to bear; and now
The turban girt his shaven brow.
Through many a change had Corinth pass'd
With Greece to Venice' rule at last;
And here, before her walls, with those
To Greece and Venice equal foes,
He stood a foe, with all the zeal
Which young and fiery converts feel,
Within whose heated bosom throngs
The memory of a thousand wrongs.
To him had Venice ceased to be
Her ancient civic boast — 'the Free;'
And in the palace of St. Mark
Unnamed accusers in the dark
Within the 'Lion's mouth' had placed
A charge against him uneffaced.
He fled in time, and saved his life,
To waste his future years in strife,
That taught his land how great her loss
In him who triumph'd o'er the Cross,
'Gainst which he rear'd the Crescent high,
And battled to avenge or die.

V

Coumourgi, he whose closing scene
Adorn'd the triumph of Eugene,
When on Carlowitz' bloody plain,
The last and mightiest of the slain,
He sank, regretting not to die,
But cursed the Christian's victory —
Coumourgi, can his glory cease,
That latest conqueror of Greece,
Till Christian hands to Greece restore
The freedom Venice gave of yore?
A hundred years have roll'd away
Since he refix'd the Moslem's sway,
And now he led the Mussulman,
And gave the guidance of the van
To Alp, who well repaid the trust
By cities levell'd with the dust;
And proved, by many a deed of death,
How firm his heart in novel faith.

VI

The walls grew weak; and fast and hot
Against them pour'd the ceaseless shot,
With unabating fury sent
From battery to battlement;
And thunder-like the pealing din
Rose from each heated culverin.
And here and there some crackling dome
Was fired before the exploding bomb;
And as the fabric sank beneath
The shattering shell's volcanic breath,
In red and wreathing columns flash'd
The flame, as loud the ruin crash'd,
Or into countless meteors driven,
Its earth-stars melted into heaven;
Whose clouds that day grew doubly dun,
Impervious to the hidden sun,
With volumed smoke that slowly grew
To one wide sky of sulphurous hue.

VII

But not for vengeance, long delay'd,
Alone, did Alp, the renegade,
The Moslem warriors sternly teach
His skill to pierce the promised breach.
Within these walls a maid was pent
His hope would win without consent
Of that inexorable sire,
Whose heart refused him in its ire,
When Alp, beneath his Christian name,
Her virgin hand aspired to claim.
In happier mood and earlier time,
While unimpeach'd for traitorous crime,
Gayest in gondola or hall,
He glitter'd through the Carnival;
And tuned the softest serenade
That e'er on Adria's waters play'd
At midnight to Italian maid.

VIII

And many deem'd her heart was won;
For sought by numbers, given to none,
Had young Francesca's hand remain'd
Still by the church's bonds unchain'd.
And when the Adriatic bore
Lanciotto to the Paynim shore,
Her wonted smiles were seen to fail,
And pensive wax'd the maid and pale;
More constant at confessional,
More rare at masque and festival;
Or seen at such, with downcast eyes
Which conquer'd hearts they ceased to prize.
With listless look she seems to gaze;
With humbler care her form arrays;
Her voice less lively in the song;
Her step, though light, less fleet among
The pairs, on whom the Morning's glance
Breaks, yet unsated with the dance.

IX

Sent by the state to guard the land
(Which, wrested from the Moslem's hand,
While Sobieski tamed his pride
By Buda's wall and Danube's side,
The chiefs of Venice wrung away
From Patra to Eubœa's bay),
Minotti held in Corinth's towers
The Doge's delegated powers,
While yet the pitying eye of Peace
Smiled o'er her long forgotten Greece.
And ere that faithless truce was broke
Which freed her from the unchristian yoke,
With him his gentle daughter came;
Nor there, since Menelaus' dame
Forsook her lord and land, to prove
What woes await on lawless love,
Had fairer form adorn'd the shore
Than she, the matchless stranger, bore.

X

The wall is rent, the ruins yawn;
And, with to-morrow's earliest dawn,
O'er the disjointed mass shall vault
The foremost of the fierce assault.
The bands are rank'd; the chosen van
Of Tartar and of Mussulman,
The full of hope, misnamed 'forlorn,'
Who hold the thought of death in scorn,
And win their way with falchion's force,
Or pave the path with many a corse

O'er which the following brave may rise,
Their stepping-stone — the last who dies!

XI

'T is midnight: on the mountains brown
The cold, round moon shines deeply down;
Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
Spreads like an ocean hung on high,
Bespangled with those isles of light,
So wildly, spiritually bright; —
Who ever gazed upon them shining
And turn'd to earth without repining,
Nor wish'd for wings to flee away,
And mix with their eternal ray?
The waves on either shore lay there
Calm, clear, and azure as the air;
And scarce their foam the pebbles shook,
But murmur'd meekly as the brook.
The winds were pillow'd on the waves;
The banners droop'd along their staves,
And, as they fell around them furling,
Above them shone the crescent curling.
And that deep silence was unbroke,
Save where the watch his signal spoke,
Save where the steed neigh'd oft and shrill,
And echo answer'd from the hill,
And the wide hum of that wild host
Rustled like leaves from coast to coast,
As rose the Muezzin's voice in air
In midnight call to wonted prayer:
It rose, that chanted mournful strain,
Like some lone spirit's o'er the plain;
'T was musical, but sadly sweet,
Such as when winds and harp-strings meet,
And take a long unmeasured tone,
To mortal minstrelsy unknown.
It seem'd to those within the wall
A cry prophetic of their fall.
It struck even the besieger's ear
With something ominous and drear,
An undefined and sudden thrill
Which makes the heart a moment still,
Then beat with quicker pulse, ashamed
Of that strange sense its silence framed;
Such as a sudden passing-bell
Wakes, though but for a stranger's knell.

XII

The tent of Alp was on the shore;
The sound was hush'd, the prayer was o'er;
The watch was set, the night-round made,
All mandates issued and obey'd.
'T is but another anxious night,
His pains the morrow may requite
With all revenge and love can pay,
In guerdon for their long delay.
Few hours remain, and he hath need
Of rest, to nerve for many a deed
Of slaughter; but within his soul
The thoughts like troubled waters roll.
He stood alone among the host;
Not his the loud fanatic boast
To plant the crescent o'er the cross,
Or risk a life with little loss,
Secure in paradise to be
By Houris loved immortally.
Nor his, what burning patriots feel,
The stern exaltedness of zeal,
Profuse of blood, untired in toil,
When battling on the parent soil.
He stood alone — a renegade
Against the country he betray'd;
He stood alone amidst his band,
Without a trusted heart or hand.
They follow'd him, for he was brave,
And great the spoil he got and gave;
They crouch'd to him, for he had skill
To warp and wield the vulgar will:
But still his Christian origin
With them was little less than sin.
They envied even the faithless fame
He earn'd beneath a Moslem name;
Since he, their mightiest chief, had been
In youth a bitter Nazarene.
They did not know how pride can stoop,
When baffled feelings withering droop;
They did not know how hate can burn
In hearts once changed from soft to stern;
Nor all the false and fatal zeal
The convert of revenge can feel.
He ruled them — man may rule the worst,
By ever daring to be first;
So lions o'er the jackal sway;
The jackal points, he fells the prey,
Then on the vulgar, yelling, press
To gorge the relics of success.

XIII

His head grows fever'd and his pulse
The quick successive throbs convulse;
In vain from side to side he throws
His form, in courtship of repose;
Or if he dozed, a sound, a start
Awoke him with a sunken heart.
The turban on his hot brow press'd,
The mail weigh'd lead-like on his breast,
Though oft and long beneath its weight
Upon his eyes had slumber sate,

Without or couch or canopy,
Except a rougher field and sky
Than now might yield a warrior's bed,
Than now along the heaven was spread.
He could not rest, he could not stay
Within his tent to wait for day,
But walk'd him forth along the sand,
Where thousand sleepers strew'd the strand.
What pillow'd them? and why should he
More wakeful than the humblest be,
Since more their peril, worse their toil?
And yet they fearless dream of spoil;
While he alone, where thousands pass'd
A night of sleep, perchance their last,
In sickly vigil wander'd on,
And envied all he gazed upon.

XIV

He felt his soul become more light
Beneath the freshness of the night.
Cool was the silent sky, though calm,
And bathed his brow with airy balm.
Behind, the camp; before him lay,
In many a winding creek and bay,
Lepanto's gulf; and, on the brow
Of Delphi's hill, unshaken snow,
High and eternal, such as shone
Through thousand summers brightly gone,
Along the gulf, the mount, the clime:
It will not melt, like man, to time.
Tyrant and slave are swept away,
Less form'd to wear before the ray;
But that white veil, the lightest, frailest,
Which on the mighty mount thou hailest,
While tower and tree are torn and rent,
Shines o'er its craggy battlement:
In form a peak, in height a cloud,
In texture like a hovering shroud,
Thus high by parting Freedom spread,
As from her fond abode she fled,
And linger'd on the spot, where long
Her prophet spirit spake in song.
Oh! still her step at moments falters
O'er wither'd fields, and ruin'd altars,
And fain would wake, in souls too broken,
By pointing to each glorious token:
But vain her voice, till better days
Dawn in those yet remember'd rays,
Which shone upon the Persian flying,
And saw the Spartan smile in dying.

XV

Not mindless of these mighty times
Was Alp, despite his flight and crimes;
And through this night, as on he wander'd,
And o'er the past and present ponder'd,
And thought upon the glorious dead
Who there in better cause had bled,
He felt how faint and feebly dim
The fame that could accrue to him,
Who cheer'd the band and waved the sword,
A traitor in a turban'd horde;
And led them to the lawless siege,
Whose best success were sacrilege.
Not so had those his fancy number'd,
The chiefs whose dust around him slumber'd;
Their phalanx marshall'd on the plain,
Whose bulwarks were not then in vain.
They fell devoted, but undying;
The very gale their names seem'd sighing:
The waters murmur'd of their name;
The woods were peopled with their fame;
The silent pillar, lone and grey,
Claim'd kindred with their sacred clay;
Their spirits wrapp'd the dusky mountain,
Their memory sparkled o'er the fountain;
The meanest rill, the mightiest river
Roll'd mingling with their fame for ever.
Despite of every yoke she bears,
That land is glory's still and theirs!
'T is still a watch-word to the earth:
When man would do a deed of worth
He points to Greece, and turns to tread,
So sanction'd, on the tyrant's head;
He looks to her, and rushes on
Where life is lost, or freedom won.

XVI

Still by the shore Alp mutely mused,
And woo'd the freshness Night diffused.
There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea,
Which changeless rolls eternally;
So that wildest of waves, in their angriest mood,
Scarce break on the bounds of the land for a rood;
And the powerless moon beholds them flow,
Heedless if she come or go:
Calm or high, in main or bay,
On their course she hath no sway.
The rock unworn its base doth bare,
And looks o'er the surf, but it comes not there;
And the fringe of the foam may be seen below,
On the line that it left long ages ago:

A smooth short space of yellow sand
Between it and the greener land.

He wander'd on, along the beach,
Till within the range of a carbine's reach
Of the leaguer'd wall; but they saw him not,
Or how could he 'scape from the hostile shot?
Did traitors lurk in the Christians' hold?
Were their hands grown stiff, or their hearts wax'd cold?
I know not, in sooth; but from yonder wall
There flash'd no fire and there hiss'd no ball,
Though he stood beneath the bastion's frown,
That flank'd the sea-ward gate of the town;
Though he heard the sound, and could almost tell
The sullen words of the sentinel,
As his measured step on the stone below
Clank'd, as he paced it to and fro;
And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall
Hold o'er the dead their carnival,
Gorging and growling o'er carcass and limb;
They were too busy to bark at him!
From a Tartar's skull they had stripp'd the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;
And their white tusks crunch'd o'er the whiter skull,
As it slipp'd through their jaws, when their edge grew dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed;
So well had they broken a lingering fast
With those who had fallen for that night's repast.
And Alp knew, by the turbans that roll'd on the sand,
The foremost of these were the best of his band:
Crimson and green were the shawls of their wear,
And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair,
All the rest was shaven and bare.
The scalps were in the wild dog's maw,
The hair was tangled round his jaw.
But close by the shore, on the edge of the gulf,
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf
Who had stolen from the hills, but kept away,
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;
But he seized on his share of a steed that lay,
Pick'd by the birds, on the sands of the bay.

XVII

Alp turn'd him from the sickening sight:
Never had shaken his nerves in fight;
But he better could brook to behold the dying,
Deep in the tide of their warm blood lying,
Scorch'd with the death-thirst, and writhing in vain,
Than the perishing dead who are past all pain.
There is something of pride in the perilous hour,
Whate'er be the shape in which death may lower;
For Fame is there to say who bleeds,
And Honour's eye on daring deeds!
But when all is past, it is humbling to tread
O'er the weltering field of the tombless dead,
And see worms of the earth, and fowls of the air,
Beasts of the forest, all gathering there;
All regarding man as their prey,
All rejoicing in his decay.

XVIII

There is a temple in ruin stands,
Fashion'd by long forgotten hands;
Two or three columns, and many a stone,
Marble and granite, with grass o'ergrown!
Out upon Time! it will leave no more
Of the things to come than the things before!
Out upon Time! who for ever will leave
But enough of the past for the future to grieve
O'er that which hath been, and o'er that which must be:
What we have seen, our sons shall see;
Remnants of things that have pass'd away,
Fragments of stone, rear'd by creatures of clay!

XIX

He sate him down at a pillar's base,
And pass'd his hand athwart his face.

Like one in dreary musing mood,
Declining was his attitude;
His head was drooping on his breast,
Fever'd, throbbing, and oppress'd;
And o'er his brow, so downward bent,
Oft his beating fingers went,
Hurriedly, as you may see
Your own run over the ivory key,
Ere the measured tone is taken
By the chords you would awaken.
There he sate all heavily,
As he heard the night-wind sigh.
Was it the wind, through some hollow stone,
Sent that soft and tender moan?
He lifted his head, and he look'd on the sea,
But it was unrippled as glass may be;
He look'd on the long grass — it waved not a blade;
How was that gentle sound convey'd?
He look'd to the banners — each flag lay still,
So did the leaves on Cithæron's hill,
And he felt not a breath come over his cheek;
What did that sudden sound bespeak?
He turn'd to the left — is he sure of sight?
There sate a lady, youthful and bright!

XX

He started up with more of fear
Than if an armèd foe were near.
'God of my fathers! what is here?
Who art thou, and wherefore sent
So near a hostile armament?'
His trembling hands refused to sign
The cross he deem'd no more divine:
He had resumed it in that hour,
But conscience wrung away the power.
He gazed, he saw: he knew the face
Of beauty, and the form of grace;
It was Francesca by his side,
The maid who might have been his bride!

The rose was yet upon her cheek,
But mellow'd with a tenderer streak:
Where was the play of her soft lips fled?
Gone was the smile that enliven'd their red.
The ocean's calm within their view,
Beside her eye had less of blue;
But like that cold wave it stood still,
And its glance, though clear, was chill.
Around her form a thin robe twining,
Nought conceal'd her bosom shining;
Through the parting of her hair,
Floating darkly downward there,
Her rounded arm show'd white and bare.
And ere yet she made reply,
Once she raised her hand on high;
It was so wan and transparent of hue,
You might have seen the moon shine through.

XXI

'I come from my rest to him I love best,
That I may be happy, and he may be bless'd.
I have pass'd the guards, the gate, the wall;
Sought thee in safety through foes and all.
'T is said the lion will turn and flee
From a maid in the pride of her purity;
And the Power on high, that can shield the good
Thus from the tyrant of the wood,
Hath extended its mercy to guard me as well
From the hands of the leaguering infidel.
I come — and if I come in vain,
Never, oh never, we meet again!
Thou hast done a fearful deed
In falling away from thy father's creed:
But dash that turban to earth, and sign
The sign of the cross, and for ever be mine;
Wring the black drop from thy heart,
And to-morrow unites us no more to part.'

'And where should our bridal couch be spread?
In the midst of the dying and the dead?
For to-morrow we give to the slaughter and flame
The sons and the shrines of the Christian name.
None, save thou and thine, I 've sworn,
Shall be left upon the morn:
But thee will I bear to a lovely spot,
Where our hands shall be join'd, and our sorrow forgot.
There thou yet shalt be my bride,
When once again I 've quell'd the pride
Of Venice; and her hated race
Have felt the arm they would debase
Scourge, with a whip of scorpions, those
Whom vice and envy made my foes.'

Upon his hand she laid her own —
Light was the touch, but it thrill'd to the bone,
And shot a chillness to his heart,
Which fix'd him beyond the power to start.
Though slight was that grasp so mortal cold,
He could not loose him from its hold;

But never did clasp of one so dear
Strike on the pulse with such feeling of fear,
As those thin fingers, long and white,
Froze through his blood by their touch that night.
The feverish glow of his brow was gone,
And his heart sank so still that it felt like stone,
As he look'd on the face, and beheld its hue,
So deeply changed from what he knew, —
Fair but faint, without the ray
Of mind, that made each feature play
Like sparkling waves on a sunny day.
And her motionless lips lay still as death,
And her words came forth without her breath,
And there rose not a heave o'er her bosom's swell,
And there seem'd not a pulse in her veins to dwell.
Though her eye shone out, yet the lids were fix'd,
And the glance that it gave was wild and unmix'd
With aught of change, as the eyes may seem
Of the restless who walk in a troubled dream;
Like the figures on arras, that gloomily glare,
Stirr'd by the breath of the wintry air,
So seen by the dying lamp's fitful light,
Lifeless, but life-like, and awful to sight;
As they seem, through the dimness, about to come down
From the shadowy wall where their images frown;
Fearfully flitting to and fro,
As the gusts on the tapestry come and go.

'If not for love of me be given
Thus much, then, for the love of heaven, —
Again I say, — that turban tear
From off thy faithless brow, and swear
Thine injured country's sons to spare,
Or thou art lost; and never shalt see —
Not earth, that 's past — but heaven or me.
If this thou dost accord, albeit
A heavy doom 't is thine to meet,
That doom shall half absolve thy sin,
And mercy's gate may receive thee within.
But pause one moment more, and take
The curse of Him thou didst forsake;
And look once more to heaven, and see
Its love for ever shut from thee.
There is a light cloud by the moon —
'T is passing, and will pass full soon —
If, by the time its vapoury sail
Hath ceased her shaded orb to veil,
Thy heart within thee is not changed,
Then God and man are both avenged;
Dark will thy doom be, darker still
Thine immortality of ill.'

Alp look'd to heaven, and saw on high
The sign she spake of in the sky;
But his heart was swollen, and turn'd aside
By deep interminable pride:
This first false passion of his breast
Roll'd like a torrent o'er the rest.
He sue for mercy! *He* dismay'd
By wild words of a timid maid!
He, wrong'd by Venice, vow to save
Her sons, devoted to the grave!
No — though that cloud were thunder's worst,
And charged to crush him — let it burst!

He look'd upon it earnestly,
Without an accent of reply;
He watch'd it passing; it is flown.
Full on his eye the clear moon shone,
And thus he spake: 'Whate'er my fate,
I am no changeling — 't is too late;
The reed in storms may bow and quiver,
Then rise again; the tree must shiver.
What Venice made me, I must be,
Her foe in all, save love to thee.
But thou art safe; oh, fly with me!'
He turn'd, but she is gone!
Nothing is there but the column stone.
Hath she sunk in the earth, or melted in air?
He saw not — he knew not — but nothing is there.

XXII

The night is past, and shines the sun
As if that morn were a jocund one.
Lightly and brightly breaks away
The Morning from her mantle grey,
And the Noon will look on a sultry day.
Hark to the trump, and the drum,
And the mournful sound of the barbarous horn,
And the flap of the banners that flit as they 're borne,
And the neigh of the steed, and the multitude's hum,
And the clash, and the shout, 'They come! they come!'

The horsetails are pluck'd from the ground, and the sword
From its sheath; and they form, and but wait for the word.
Tartar, and Spahi, and Turcoman,
Strike your tents, and throng to the van;
Mount ye, spur ye, skirr the plain,
That the fugitive may flee in vain
When he breaks from the town, and none escape,
Aged or young, in the Christian shape;
While your fellows on foot, in a fiery mass,
Bloodstain the breach through which they pass.
The steeds are all bridled, and snort to the rein;
Curved is each neck, and flowing each mane;
White is the foam of their champ on the bit:
The spears are uplifted; the matches are lit;
The cannon are pointed, and ready to roar,
And crush the wall they have crumbled before.
Forms in his phalanx each Janizar;
Alp at their head; his right arm is bare,
So is the blade of his scimitar;
The khan and the pachas are all at their post;
The vizier himself at the head of the host.
When the culverin's signal is fired, then on;
Leave not in Corinth a living one —
A priest at her altars, a chief in her halls,
A hearth in her mansions, a stone on her walls.
God and the Prophet — Alla Hu!
Up to the skies with that wild halloo!
'There the breach lies for passage, the ladder to scale;
And your hands on your sabres, and how should ye fail?
He who first downs with the red cross may crave
His heart's dearest wish; let him ask it, and have!'
Thus utter'd Coumourgi, the dauntless vizier;
The reply was the brandish of sabre and spear,
And the shout of fierce thousands in joyous ire: —
Silence — hark to the signal — fire!

XXIII

As the wolves, that headlong go
On the stately buffalo,
Though with fiery eyes, and angry roar,
And hoofs that stamp, and horns that gore,
He tramples on earth, or tosses on high
The foremost who rush on his strength but to die:
Thus against the wall they went,
Thus the first were backward bent.
Many a bosom, sheathed in brass,
Strew'd the earth like broken glass,
Shiver'd by the shot that tore
The ground whereon they moved no more.
Even as they fell, in files they lay;
Like the mower's grass at the close of day
When his work is done on the levell'd plain,
Such was the fall of the foremost slain.

XXIV

As the spring-tides, with heavy plash,
From the cliffs invading dash
Huge fragments, sapp'd by the ceaseless flow
Till white and thundering down they go,
Like the avalanche's snow
On the Alpine vales below;
Thus at length, outbreathed and worn,
Corinth's sons were downward borne
By the long and oft renew'd
Charge of the Moslem multitude.
In firmness they stood, and in masses they fell,
Heap'd by the host of the infidel,
Hand to hand, and foot to foot.
Nothing there, save death, was mute;
Stroke, and thrust, and flash, and cry
For quarter, or for victory,
Mingle there with the volleying thunder,
Which makes the distant cities wonder
How the sounding battle goes,
If with them or for their foes;
If they must mourn, or may rejoice
In that annihilating voice,
Which pierces the deep hills through and through
With an echo dread and new:
You might have heard it, on that day,
O'er Salamis and Megara
(We have heard the hearers say),
Even unto Piræus' bay.

XXV

From the point of encountering blades to the hilt,
Sabres and swords with blood were gilt;

But the rampart is won, and the spoil begun,
And all but the after carnage done.
Shriller shrieks now mingling come
From within the plunder'd dome.
Hark to the haste of flying feet,
That splash in the blood of the slippery street;
But here and there, where 'vantage ground
Against the foe may still be found,
Desperate groups, of twelve or ten,
Make a pause, and turn again —
With banded backs against the wall,
Fiercely stand, or fighting fall.

There stood an old man — his hairs were white,
But his veteran arm was full of might:
So gallantly bore he the brunt of the fray,
The dead before him, on that day,
In a semicircle lay;
Still he combated unwounded,
Though retreating, unsurrounded.
Many a scar of former fight
Lurk'd beneath his corslet bright;
But of every wound his body bore,
Each and all had been ta'en before.
Though aged, he was so iron of limb,
Few of our youth could cope with him;
And the foes, whom he singly kept at bay,
Outnumber'd his thin hairs of silver grey.
From right to left his sabre swept:
Many an Othman mother wept
Sons that were unborn, when dipp'd
His weapon first in Moslem gore,
Ere his years could count a score.
Of all he might have been the sire
Who fell that day beneath his ire:
For, sonless left long years ago,
His wrath made many a childless foe;
And since the day, when in the strait
His only boy had met his fate,
His parent's iron hand did doom
More than a human hecatomb.
If shades by carnage be appeased,
Patroclus' spirit less was pleased
Than his, Minotti's son, who died
Where Asia's bounds and ours divide.
Buried he lay, where thousands before
For thousands of years were inhumed on the shore;
What of them is left, to tell
Where they lie, and how they fell?
Not a stone on their turf, nor a bone in their graves;
But they live in the verse that immortally saves.

XXVI

Hark to the Allah shout! a band
Of the Mussulman bravest and best is at hand.
Their leader's nervous arm is bare,
Swifter to smite, and never to spare —
Unclothed to the shoulder it waves them on;
Thus in the fight is he ever known.
Others a gaudier garb may show,
To tempt the spoil of the greedy foe;
Many a hand 's on a richer hilt,
But none on a steel more ruddily gilt;
Many a loftier turban may wear, —
Alp is but known by the white arm bare;
Look through the thick of the fight, 't is there!
There is not a standard on that shore
So well advanced the ranks before;
There is not a banner in Moslem war
Will lure the Delhis half so far;
It glances like a falling star!
Where'er that mighty arm is seen,
The bravest be, or late have been;
There the craven cries for quarter
Vainly to the vengeful Tartar;
Or the hero, silent lying,
Scorns to yield a groan in dying;
Mustering his last feeble blow
'Gainst the nearest levell'd foe,
Though faint beneath the mutual wound,
Grappling on the gory ground.

XXVII

Still the old man stood erect,
And Alp's career a moment check'd.
'Yield thee, Minotti; quarter take,
For thine own, thy daughter's sake.'

'Never, renegado, never!
Though the life of thy gift would last for ever.'

'Francesca! — Oh, my promised bride!
Must she too perish by thy pride?'
'She is safe.' — 'Where? where?' — 'In heaven;
From whence thy traitor soul is driven —
Far from thee, and undefiled.'
Grimly then Minotti smiled,

As he saw Alp staggering bow
Before his words, as with a blow.

'Oh God! when died she?' — 'Yesternight —
Nor weep I for her spirit's flight:
None of my pure race shall be
Slaves to Mahomet and thee.
Come on!' — That challenge is in vain,
Alp 's already with the slain!
While Minotti's words were wreaking
More revenge in bitter speaking
Than his falchion's point had found,
Had the time allow'd to wound,
From within the neighbouring porch
Of a long defended church,
Where the last and desperate few
Would the failing fight renew,
The sharp shot dash'd Alp to the ground.
Ere an eye could view the wound
That crash'd through the brain of the infidel,
Round he spun, and down he fell;
A flash like fire within his eyes
Blazed, as he bent no more to rise,
And then eternal darkness sunk
Through all the palpitating trunk;
Nought of life left, save a quivering
Where his limbs were slightly shivering.
They turn'd him on his back; his breast
And brow were stain'd with gore and dust,
And through his lips the life-blood oozed
From its deep veins lately loosed.
But in his pulse there was no throb,
Nor on his lips one dying sob;
Sigh, nor word, nor struggling breath
Heralded his way to death:
Ere his very thought could pray,
Unaneled he pass'd away,
Without a hope from mercy's aid, —
To the last — a Renegade.

XXVIII

Fearfully the yell arose
Of his followers and his foes,
These in joy, in fury those.
Then again in conflict mixing,
Clashing swords, and spears transfixing,
Interchanged the blow and thrust,
Hurling warriors in the dust.
Street by street, and foot by foot,
Still Minotti dares dispute
The latest portion of the land
Left beneath his high command;
With him, aiding heart and hand,
The remnant of his gallant band.
Still the church is tenable,
  Whence issued late the fated ball,
  That half avenged the city's fall,
When Alp, her fierce assailant, fell.
Thither bending sternly back,
They leave before a bloody track;
And, with their faces to the foe,
Dealing wounds with every blow,
The chief, and his retreating train,
Join to those within the fane.
There they yet may breathe awhile,
Shelter'd by the massy pile.

XXIX

Brief breathing-time! the turban'd host,
With adding ranks and raging boast,
Press onwards with such strength and heat,
Their numbers balk their own retreat;
For narrow the way that led to the spot
Where still the Christians yielded not;
And the foremost, if fearful, may vainly try
Through the massy column to turn and fly;
They perforce must do or die.
They die; but ere their eyes could close,
Avengers o'er their bodies rose.
Fresh and furious, fast they fill
The ranks unthinn'd, though slaughter'd still;
And faint the weary Christians wax
Before the still renew'd attacks.
And now the Othmans gain the gate;
Still resists its iron weight,
And still, all deadly aim'd and hot,
From every crevice comes the shot;
From every shatter'd window pour
The volleys of the sulphurous shower.
But the portal wavering grows and weak —
The iron yields, the hinges creak —
It bends — it falls — and all is o'er;
Lost Corinth may resist no more!

XXX

Darkly, sternly, and all alone,
Minotti stood o'er the altar stone.
Madonna's face upon him shone,
Painted in heavenly hues above,
With eyes of light and looks of love;
And placed upon that holy shrine
To fix our thoughts on things divine,
When pictured there, we kneeling see
Her, and the boy-God on her knee,
Smiling sweetly on each prayer
To heaven, as if to waft it there,

Still she smiled; even now she smiles,
Though slaughter streams along her aisles.
Minotti lifted his aged eye,
And made the sign of a cross with a sigh,
Then seized a torch which blazed thereby;
And still he stood, while, with steel and flame,
Inward and onward the Mussulman came.

XXXI

The vaults beneath the mosaic stone
Contain'd the dead of ages gone;
Their names were on the graven floor,
But now illegible with gore;
The carvèd crests, and curious hues
The varied marble's veins diffuse,
Were smear'd, and slippery — stain'd, and strown
With broken swords and helms o'erthrown.
There were dead above, and the dead below
Lay cold in many a coffin'd row;
You might see them piled in sable state,
By a pale light through a gloomy grate;
But War had enter'd their dark caves,
And stored along the vaulted graves
Her sulphurous treasures, thickly spread
In masses by the fleshless dead.
Here, throughout the siege, had been
The Christians' chiefest magazine;
To these a late-form'd train now led,
Minotti's last and stern resource
Against the foe's o'erwhelming force.

XXXII

The foe came on, and few remain
To strive, and those must strive in vain.
For lack of further lives, to slake
The thirst of vengeance now awake,
With barbarous blows they gash the dead,
And lop the already lifeless head,
And fell the statues from their niche,
And spoil the shrines of offerings rich,
And from each other's rude hands wrest
The silver vessels saints had bless'd.
To the high altar on they go;
Oh, but it made a glorious show!
On its table still behold
The cup of consecrated gold;
Massy and deep, a glittering prize,
Brightly it sparkles to plunderers' eyes.
That morn it held the holy wine,
Converted by Christ to his blood so divine,
Which his worshippers drank at the break of day,
To shrive their souls ere they join'd in the fray.
Still a few drops within it lay;
And round the sacred table glow
Twelve lofty lamps, in splendid row,
From the purest metal cast;
A spoil — the richest, and the last.

XXXIII

So near they came, the nearest stretch'd
To grasp the spoil he almost reach'd,
When old Minotti's hand
Touch'd with the torch the train —
'T is fired!
Spire, vaults, the shrine, the spoil, the slain,
The turban'd victors, the Christian band,
All that of living or dead remain,
Hurl'd on high with the shiver'd fane,
In one wild roar expired!
The shatter'd town — the walls thrown down —
The waves a moment backward bent —
The hills that shake, although unrent,
As if an earthquake pass'd —
The thousand shapeless things all driven
In cloud and flame athwart the heaven,
By that tremendous blast —
Proclaim'd the desperate conflict o'er
On that too long afflicted shore.
Up to the sky like rockets go
All that mingled there below:
Many a tall and goodly man,
Scorch'd and shrivell'd to a span,
When he fell to earth again
Like a cinder strew'd the plain.
Down the ashes shower like rain;
Some fell in the gulf, which received the sprinkles
With a thousand circling wrinkles;
Some fell on the shore, but, far away,
Scatter'd o'er the isthmus lay;
Christian or Moslem, which be they?
Let their mothers see and say!
When in cradled rest they lay,
And each nursing mother smiled
On the sweet sleep of her child,
Little deem'd she such a day
Would rend those tender limbs away.
Not the matrons that them bore
Could discern their offspring more;
That one moment left no trace
More of human form or face
Save a scatter'd scalp or bone.

And down came blazing rafters, strown
Around, and many a falling stone,
Deeply dinted in the clay,
All blacken'd there and reeking lay.
All the living things that heard
That deadly earth-shock disappear'd:
The wild birds flew; the wild dogs fled,
And howling left the unburied dead;
The camels from their keepers broke;
The distant steer forsook the yoke —
The nearer steed plunged o'er the plain,
And burst his girth, and tore his rein;
The bull-frog's note, from out the marsh,
Deep-mouth'd arose, and doubly harsh;
The wolves yell'd on the cavern'd hill
Where echo roll'd in thunder still;
The jackal's troop, in gather'd cry,
Bay'd from afar complainingly,
With a mix'd and mournful sound,
Like crying babe and beaten hound:
With sudden wing and ruffled breast,
The eagle left his rocky nest,
And mounted nearer to the sun,
The clouds beneath him seem'd so dun;
Their smoke assail'd his startled beak,
And made him higher soar and shriek —
Thus was Corinth lost and won!

PARISINA

TO
SCROPE BERDMORE DAVIES, ESQ.
THE FOLLOWING POEM
IS INSCRIBED
BY ONE WHO HAS LONG ADMIRED HIS TALENTS
AND VALUED HIS FRIENDSHIP.
January 22, 1816.

ADVERTISEMENT

The following poem is grounded on a circumstance mentioned in Gibbon's *Antiquities of the House of Brunswick*. I am aware, that in modern times the delicacy or fastidiousness of the reader may deem such subjects unfit for the purposes of poetry. The Greek dramatists, and some of the best of our old English writers, were of a different opinion: as Alfieri and Schiller have also been, more recently, upon the Continent. The following extract will explain the facts on which the story is founded. The name of *Azo* is substituted for Nicholas, as more metrical.

'Under the reign of Nicholas III. Ferrara was polluted with a domestic tragedy. By the testimony of an attendant, and his own observation, the Marquis of Este discovered the incestuous loves of his wife Parisina and Hugo his bastard son, a beautiful and valiant youth. They were beheaded in the castle by the sentence of a father and husband, who published his shame, and survived their execution. He was unfortunate, if they were guilty: if they were innocent, he was still more unfortunate; nor is there any possible situation in which I can sincerely approve the last act of the justice of a parent.' — GIBBON'S *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. iii. p. 470.

I

It is the hour when from the boughs
  The nightingale's high note is heard;
It is the hour when lovers' vows
  Seem sweet in every whisper'd word;
And gentle winds, and waters near,
Make music to the lonely ear.
Each flower the dews have lightly wet,
And in the sky the stars are met,
And on the wave is deeper blue,
And on the leaf a browner hue,
And in the heaven that clear obscure,
So softly dark and darkly pure,
Which follows the decline of day,
As twilight melts beneath the moon away.

II

But it is not to list to the waterfall
That Parisina leaves her hall,
And it is not to gaze on the heavenly light
That the lady walks in the shadow of night.
And if she sits in Este's bower,
'T is not for the sake of its full-blown flower;
She listens, but not for the nightingale,
Though her ear expects as soft a tale.
There glides a step through the foliage thick,
And her cheek grows pale, and her heart beats quick.
There whispers a voice through the rustling leaves,
And her blush returns, and her bosom heaves:
A moment more, and they shall meet;
'T is past — her lover 's at her feet.

III

And what unto them is the world beside,
With all its change of time and tide?
Its living things, its earth and sky,
Are nothing to their mind and eye.
And heedless as the dead are they
  Of aught around, above, beneath;
As if all else had pass'd away,
  They only for each other breathe;

Their very sighs are full of joy
So deep, that did it not decay,
That happy madness would destroy
The hearts which feel its fiery sway.
Of guilt, of peril, do they deem
In that tumultuous tender dream?
Who that have felt that passion's power,
Or paused or fear'd in such an hour?
Or thought how brief such moments last?
But yet — they are already past!
Alas! we must awake before
We know such vision comes no more.

IV

With many a lingering look they leave
The spot of guilty gladness past;
And though they hope and vow, they grieve,
As if that parting were the last.
The frequent sigh, the long embrace,
The lip that there would cling for ever,
While gleams on Parisina's face
The Heaven she fears will not forgive her,
As if each calmly conscious star
Beheld her frailty from afar —
The frequent sigh, the long embrace,
Yet binds them to their trysting-place.
But it must come, and they must part
In fearful heaviness of heart,
With all the deep and shuddering chill
Which follows fast the deeds of ill.

V

And Hugo is gone to his lonely bed,
To covet there another's bride;
But she must lay her conscious head
A husband's trusting heart beside.
But fever'd in her sleep she seems,
And red her cheek with troubled dreams,
And mutters she in her unrest
A name she dare not breathe by day,
And clasps her Lord unto the breast
Which pants for one away.
And he to that embrace awakes,
And, happy in the thought, mistakes
That dreaming sigh and warm caress
For such as he was wont to bless;
And could in very fondness weep
O'er her who loves him even in sleep.

VI

He clasp'd her sleeping to his heart,
And listen'd to each broken word:
He hears — Why doth Prince Azo start,
As if the Archangel's voice he heard?
And well he may — a deeper doom
Could scarcely thunder o'er his tomb,
When he shall wake to sleep no more,
And stand the eternal throne before;
And well he may — his earthly peace
Upon that sound is doom'd to cease.
That sleeping whisper of a name
Bespeaks her guilt and Azo's shame.
And whose that name? that o'er his pillow
Sounds fearful as the breaking billow,
Which rolls the plank upon the shore,
And dashes on the pointed rock
The wretch who sinks to rise no more, —
So came upon his soul the shock.
And whose that name? 't is Hugo's, his —
In sooth he had not deem'd of this!
'T is Hugo's, — he, the child of one
He loved — his own all-evil son —
The offspring of his wayward youth,
When he betray'd Bianca's truth,
The maid whose folly could confide
In him who made her not his bride.

VII

He pluck'd his poniard in its sheath,
But sheathed it ere the point was bare;
Howe'er unworthy now to breathe,
He could not slay a thing so fair —
At least not smiling, sleeping there.
Nay more: — he did not wake her then,
But gazed upon her with a glance
Which, had she roused her from her trance,
Had frozen her sense to sleep again;
And o'er his brow the burning lamp
Gleam'd on the dew-drops big and damp.
She spake no more, but still she slumber'd,
While in his thought her days are number'd.

VIII

And with the morn he sought, and found,
In many a tale from those around,
The proof of all he fear'd to know,
Their present guilt, his future woe.
The long-conniving damsels seek
To save themselves, and would transfer
The guilt, the shame, the doom, to her.
Concealment is no more; they speak
All circumstance which may compel
Full credence to the tale they tell;
And Azo's tortured heart and ear
Have nothing more to feel or hear.

IX

He was not one who brook'd delay:
Within the chamber of his state,
The chief of Este's ancient sway
Upon his throne of judgment sate.
His nobles and his guards are there;
Before him is the sinful pair, —
Both young, and *one* how passing fair!
With swordless belt, and fetter'd hand,
Oh, Christ! that thus a son should stand
Before a father's face!
Yet thus must Hugo meet his sire,
And hear the sentence of his ire,
The tale of his disgrace!
And yet he seems not overcome,
Although as yet his voice be dumb.

X

And still, and pale, and silently
Did Parisina wait her doom;
How changed since last her speaking eye
Glanced gladness round the glittering room,
Where high-born men were proud to wait,
Where Beauty watch'd to imitate
Her gentle voice, her lovely mien,
And gather from her air and gait
The graces of its queen.
Then, — had her eye in sorrow wept,
A thousand warriors forth had leapt,
A thousand swords had sheathless shone,
And made her quarrel all their own.
Now, — what is she? and what are they?
Can she command or these obey?
All silent and unheeding now,
With downcast eyes and knitting brow,
And folded arms, and freezing air,
And lips that scarce their scorn forbear,
Her knights and dames, her court — is there.
And he, the chosen one, whose lance
Had yet been couch'd before her glance,
Who — were his arm a moment free —
Had died or gain'd her liberty;
The minion of his father's bride, —
He, too, is fetter'd by her side;
Nor sees her swoln and full eye swim
Less for her own despair than him.
Those lids, — o'er which the violet vein
Wandering leaves a tender stain,
Shining through the smoothest white
That e'er did softest kiss invite, —
Now seem'd with hot and livid glow
To press, not shade, the orbs below;
Which glance so heavily, and fill,
As tear on tear grows gathering still.

XI

And he for her had also wept,
But for the eyes that on him gazed:
His sorrow, if he felt it, slept;
Stern and erect his brow was raised.
Whate'er the grief his soul avow'd,
He would not shrink before the crowd.
But yet he dared not look on her:
Remembrance of the hours that were, —
His guilt, his love, his present state,
His father's wrath, all good men's hate,
His earthly, his eternal fate —
And hers, — oh, hers! — he dared not throw
One look upon that deathlike brow,
Else had his rising heart betray'd
Remorse for all the wreck it made.

XII

And Azo spake: — 'But yesterday
I gloried in a wife and son;
That dream this morning pass'd away;
Ere day declines, I shall have none.
My life must linger on alone;
Well, — let that pass, — there breathes not one
Who would not do as I have done.
Those ties are broken — not by me;
Let that too pass; — the doom's prepared!
Hugo, the priest awaits on thee,
And then — thy crime's reward!
Away! address thy prayers to Heaven,
Before its evening stars are met —
Learn if thou there canst be forgiven;
Its mercy may absolve thee yet.
But here, upon the earth beneath,
There is no spot where thou and I
Together, for an hour, could breathe.
Farewell! I will not see thee die —
But thou, frail thing! shalt view his head —
Away! I cannot speak the rest.
Go! woman of the wanton breast;
Not I, but thou his blood dost shed:
Go! if that sight thou canst outlive,
And joy thee in the life I give.'

XIII

And here stern Azo hid his face,
For on his brow the swelling vein
Throbb'd as if back upon his brain
The hot blood ebb'd and flow'd again;
And therefore bow'd he for a space,

And pass’d his shaking hand along
His eye, to veil it from the throng.
While Hugo raised his chainèd hands,
And for a brief delay demands
His father’s ear; the silent sire
Forbids not what his words require.

‘It is not that I dread the death —
For thou hast seen me by thy side
All redly through the battle ride;
And that not once a useless brand
Thy slaves have wrested from my hand,
Hath shed more blood in cause of thine
Than e’er can stain the axe of mine.
Thou gav’st, and may’st resume my breath,
A gift for which I thank thee not;
Nor are my mother’s wrongs forgot,
Her slighted love and ruin’d name,
Her offspring’s heritage of shame;
But she is in the grave, where he,
Her son, thy rival, soon shall be.
Her broken heart, my sever’d head,
Shall witness for thee from the dead
How trusty and how tender were
Thy youthful love, paternal care.
’T is true that I have done thee wrong,
But wrong for wrong: this deem’d thy bride, —
The other victim of thy pride, —
Thou know’st for me was destined long.
Thou saw’st, and covetedst her charms;
And with thy very crime, my birth,
Thou tauntedst me — as little worth;
A match ignoble for her arms,
Because, forsooth, I could not claim
The lawful heirship of thy name,
Nor sit on Este’s lineal throne:
Yet, were a few short summers mine,
My name should more than Este’s shine
With honours all my own.
I had a sword — and have a breast
That should have won as haught a crest
As ever waved along the line
Of all these sovereign sires of thine.
Not always knightly spurs are worn
The brightest by the better born;
And mine have lanced my courser’s flank
Before proud chiefs of princely rank,
When charging to the cheering cry
Of “Este and of Victory!”
I will not plead the cause of crime,
Nor sue thee to redeem from time
A few brief hours or days that must
At length roll o’er my reckless dust; —
Such maddening moments as my past,
They could not, and they did not, last.
Albeit my birth and name be base,
And thy nobility of race
Disdain’d to deck a thing like me,
Yet in my lineaments they trace
Some features of my father’s face,
And in my spirit — all of thee;
From thee this tamelessness of heart,
From thee — nay, wherefore dost thou start?
From thee in all their vigour came
My arm of strength, my soul of flame;
Thou didst not give me life alone,
But all that made me more thine own.
See what thy guilty love hath done!
Repaid thee with too like a son!
I am no bastard in my soul,
For that, like thine, abhorr’d control:
And for my breath, that hasty boon
Thou gav’st and wilt resume so soon,
I valued it no more than thou,
When rose thy casque above thy brow,
And we, all side by side, have striven,
And o’er the dead our coursers driven.
The past is nothing — and at last
The future can but be the past;
Yet would I that I then had died:
For though thou work’dst my mother’s ill,
And made thy own my destined bride,
I feel thou art my father still;
And, harsh as sounds thy hard decree,
’T is not unjust, although from thee.
Begot in sin, to die in shame,
My life begun and ends the same:
As err’d the sire, so err’d the son,
And thou must punish both in one.
My crime seems worst to human view,
But God must judge between us too!’

XIV

He ceased, and stood with folded arms,
On which the circling fetters sounded;
And not an ear but felt as wounded,
Of all the chiefs that there were rank’d,
When those dull chains in meeting clank’d:
Till Parisina’s fatal charms
Again attracted every eye —
Would she thus hear him doom’d to die!
She stood, I said, all pale and still,
The living cause of Hugo’s ill.
Her eyes unmoved, but full and wide,
Not once had turn’d to either side:
Nor once did those sweet eyelids close,
Or shade the glance o’er which they rose,

But round their orbs of deepest blue
The circling white dilated grew;
And there with glassy gaze she stood
As ice were in her curdled blood.
But every now and then a tear
So large and slowly gather'd slid
From the long dark fringe of that fair lid,
It was a thing to see, not hear!
And those who saw, it did surprise,
Such drops could fall from human eyes.
To speak she thought — the imperfect note
Was choked within her swelling throat,
Yet seem'd in that low hollow groan
Her whole heart gushing in the tone.
It ceased — again she thought to speak,
Then burst her voice in one long shriek,
And to the earth she fell like stone
Or statue from its base o'erthrown,
More like a thing that ne'er had life, —
A monument of Azo's wife, —
Than her, that living guilty thing,
Whose every passion was a sting,
Which urged to guilt, but could not bear
That guilt's detection and despair.
But yet she lived, and all too soon
Recover'd from that death-like swoon,
But scarce to reason — every sense
Had been o'erstrung by pangs intense;
And each frail fibre of her brain
(As bowstrings, when relax'd by rain,
The erring arrow launch aside)
Sent forth her thoughts all wild and wide —
The past a blank, the future black,
With glimpses of a dreary track,
Like lightning on the desert path
When midnight storms are mustering wrath.
She fear'd — she felt that something ill
Lay on her soul, so deep and chill;
That there was sin and shame she knew;
That some one was to die — but who?
She had forgotten: — did she breathe?
Could this be still the earth beneath,
The sky above, and men around;
Or were they fiends who now so frown'd
On one, before whose eyes each eye
Till then had smiled in sympathy?
All was confused and undefined
To her all-jarr'd and wandering mind;
A chaos of wild hopes and fears.
And now in laughter, now in tears,
But madly still in each extreme,
She strove with that convulsive dream;
For so it seem'd on her to break —
Oh! vainly must she strive to wake!

XV

The Convent bells are ringing,
But mournfully and slow;
In the grey square turret swinging,
With a deep sound, to and fro.
Heavily to the heart they go!
Hark! the hymn is singing —
The song for the dead below,
Or the living who shortly shall be so!
For a departing being's soul
The death-hymn peals and the hollow bells knoll.
He is near his mortal goal;
Kneeling at the Friar's knee;
Sad to hear, and piteous to see,
Kneeling on the bare cold ground,
With the block before and the guards around.
And the headsman, with his bare arm ready
That the blow may be both swift and steady,
Feels if the axe be sharp and true,
Since he set its edge anew:
While the crowd in a speechless circle gather
To see the Son fall by the doom of the Father!

XVI

It is a lovely hour as yet
Before the summer sun shall set,
Which rose upon that heavy day
And mock'd it with his steadiest ray;
And his evening beams are shed
Full on Hugo's fated head,
As his last confession pouring
To the monk, his doom deploring
In penitential holiness,
He bends to hear his accents bless
With absolution such as may
Wipe our mortal stains away.
That high sun on his head did glisten
As he there did bow and listen,
And the rings of chestnut hair
Curl'd half down his neck so bare;
But brighter still the beam was thrown
Upon the axe which near him shone
With a clear and ghastly glitter —
Oh! that parting hour was bitter!
Even the stern stood chill'd with awe:
Dark the crime and just the law,
Yet they shudder'd as they saw.

XVII

The parting prayers are said and over
Of that false son and daring lover!

His beads and sins are all recounted,
His hours to their last minute mounted,
His mantling cloak before was stripp'd,
His bright brown locks must now be clipp'd:
'T is done — all closely are they shorn.
The vest which till this moment worn,
The scarf which Parisina gave,
Must not adorn him to the grave;
Even that must now be thrown aside,
And o'er his eyes the kerchief tied;
But no — that last indignity
Shall ne'er approach his haughty eye.
All feelings seemingly subdued,
In deep disdain were half renew'd,
When headsman's hands prepared to bind
Those eyes which would not brook such blind;
As if they dared not look on death.
'No — yours my forfeit blood and breath;
These hands are chain'd — but let me die
At least with an unshackled eye —
Strike' — and as the word he said,
Upon the block he bow'd his head.
These the last accents Hugo spoke:
'Strike' — and flashing fell the stroke —
Roll'd the head — and, gushing, sunk
Back the stain'd and heaving trunk,
In the dust, which each deep vein
Slaked with its ensanguined rain.
His eyes and lips a moment quiver,
Convulsed and quick, then fix for ever.
He died, as erring man should die,
  Without display, without parade;
  Meekly had he bow'd and pray'd,
  As not disdaining priestly aid,
Nor desperate of all hope on high.
And while before the Prior kneeling,
His heart was wean'd from earthly feeling;
His wrathful sire, his paramour —
What were they in such an hour?
No more reproach — no more despair;
No thought but heaven, no word but prayer,
Save the few which from him broke,
When, bared to meet the headsman's stroke,
He claim'd to die with eyes unbound,
His sole adieu to those around.

XVIII

Still as the lips that closed in death,
Each gazer's bosom held his breath:
But yet, afar, from man to man,
A cold electric shiver ran,
As down the deadly blow descended
On him whose life and love thus ended.
And, with a hushing sound compress'd,
A sigh shrunk back on every breast;
But no more thrilling noise rose there,
  Beyond the blow that to the block
  Pierced through with forced and sullen shock,
Save one: — what cleaves the silent air
So madly shrill, so passing wild,
That, as a mother's o'er her child
Done to death by sudden blow,
To the sky these accents go,
Like a soul's in endless woe?
Through Azo's palace-lattice driven,
That horrid voice ascends to heaven,
And every eye is turn'd thereon;
But sound and sight alike are gone!
It was a woman's shriek — and ne'er
In madlier accents rose despair;
And those who heard it, as it past,
In mercy wish'd it were the last.

XIX

Hugo is fallen; and, from that hour,
No more in palace, hall, or bower,
Was Parisina heard or seen.
Her name — as if she ne'er had been —
Was banish'd from each lip and ear,
Like words of wantonness or fear;
And from Prince Azo's voice, by none
Was mention heard of wife or son;
No tomb, no memory had they;
Theirs was unconsecrated clay;
At least the knight's who died that day.
But Parisina's fate lies hid
Like dust beneath the coffin lid:
Whether in convent she abode,
And won to heaven her dreary road
By blighted and remorseful years
Of scourge, and fast, and sleepless tears;
Or if she fell by bowl or steel,
For that dark love she dared to feel;
Or if, upon the moment smote,
She died by tortures less remote, —
Like him she saw upon the block,
With heart that shared the headsman's shock,
In quicken'd brokenness that came
In pity o'er her shatter'd frame, —
None knew — and none can ever know.
But whatsoe'er its end below,
Her life began and closed in woe!

XX

And Azo found another bride,
And goodly sons grew by his side;

But none so lovely and so brave
As him who wither'd in the grave;
Or if they were — on his cold eye
Their growth but glanced unheeded by,
Or noticed with a smother'd sigh.
But never tear his cheek descended,
And never smile his brow unbended;
And o'er that fair broad brow were wrought
The intersected lines of thought;
Those furrows which the burning share
Of Sorrow ploughs untimely there;
Scars of the lacerating mind
Which the Soul's war doth leave behind.
He was past all mirth or woe:
Nothing more remain'd below
But sleepless nights and heavy days,
A mind all dead to scorn or praise,
A heart which shunn'd itself — and yet
That would not yield nor could forget,
Which, when it least appear'd to melt,
Intensely thought, intensely felt:
The deepest ice which ever froze
Can only o'er the surface close;
The living stream lies quick below,
And flows — and cannot cease to flow.
Still was his seal'd-up bosom haunted
By thoughts which Nature hath implanted;
Too deeply rooted thence to vanish,
Howe'er our stifled tears we banish.
When, struggling as they rise to start,
We check those waters of the heart,
They are not dried — those tears unshed
But flow back to the fountain head,
And resting in their spring more pure,
For ever in its depth endure,
Unseen, unwept, but uncongeal'd,
And cherish'd most where least reveal'd.
With inward starts of feeling left,
To throb o'er those of life bereft;
Without the power to fill again
The desert gap which made his pain;
Without the hope to meet them where
United souls shall gladness share;
With all the consciousness that he
Had only pass'd a just decree,
That they had wrought their doom of ill;
Yet Azo's age was wretched still.
The tainted branches of the tree,
  If lopp'd with care, a strength may give,
  By which the rest shall bloom and live
All greenly fresh and wildly free:
But if the lightning, in its wrath,
The waving boughs with fury scathe,
The massy trunk the ruin feels,
And never more a leaf reveals.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

A FABLE

SONNET ON CHILLON

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
  Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
  For there thy habitation is the heart —
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd —
  To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
  Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
  And thy sad floor an altar; for 't was trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
  Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! — May none those marks efface!
  For they appeal from tyranny to God.

I

My hair is grey, but not with years,
    Nor grew it white
    In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears.
My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil,
  But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
  And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd, and barr'd — forbidden fare.
But this was for my father's faith,
I suffer'd chains and courted death;
That father perish'd at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place.
We were seven — who now are one,
  Six in youth, and one in age,
Finish'd as they had begun,
  Proud of Persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have seal'd,
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;

Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and grey,
Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp.
And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years — I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three — yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight.
And thus together, yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand, but join'd in heart,
'T was still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
A grating sound — not full and free
As they of yore were wont to be:
It might be fancy, but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest
I ought to do — and did my best;
And each did well in his degree.
The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him, with eyes as blue as heaven —
For him my soul was sorely moved.
And truly might it be distress'd
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day
(When day was beautiful to me
As to young eagles being free) —
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' ills;
And then they flow'd like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhorr'd to view below.

V

The other was as pure of mind,
But form'd to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perish'd in the foremost rank
With joy: — but not in chains to pine:
His spirit wither'd with their clank,
I saw it silently decline —
And so perchance in sooth did mine:
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had follow'd there the deer and wolf;
To him this dungeon was a gulf,
And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.

VI

Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement
Which round about the wave inthrals:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made — and like a living grave.
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay:
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky;
And then the very rock hath rock'd,
And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,

Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 't was coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunters' fare,
And for the like had little care.
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mould
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side.
But why delay the truth? — he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand — nor dead, —
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died — and they unlock'd his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begg'd them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine — it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer;
They coldly laugh'd — and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII

But he, the favourite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyr'd father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired —
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was wither'd on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood: —
I 've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I 've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I 've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors — this was woe
Unmix'd with such — but sure and slow.
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender — kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright;
And not a word of murmur, not
A groan o'er his untimely lot, —
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence — lost
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less.
I listen'd, but I could not hear —
I call'd, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 't was hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonishèd.
I call'd, and thought I heard a sound —
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rush'd to him: — I found him not,
I only stirr'd in this black spot,
I only lived — *I* only drew
The accursèd breath of dungeon-dew;
The last — the sole — the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath —
My brothers — both had ceased to breathe:
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill,
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive —
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
        I know not why
        I could not die,

I had no earthly hope — but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

IX

What next befell me then and there
I know not well — I never knew;
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too.
I had no thought, no feeling — none —
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and grey,
It was not night — it was not day,
It was not even the dungeon-light
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness — without a place;
There were no stars, no earth, no time,
No check, no change, no good, no crime —
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

X

A light broke in upon my brain, —
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery.
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seem'd to say them all for me!
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seem'd like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in wingèd guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For — Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile —
I sometimes deem'd that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 't was mortal — well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone, —
Lone — as the corse within its shroud,
Lone — as a solitary cloud,
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was: — my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me.
No child, no sire, no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;

Than thee, Mazeppa! On the earth
So fit a pair had never birth,
Since Alexander's days till now,
As thy Bucephalus and thou.
All Scythia's fame to thine should yield
For pricking on o'er flood and field.'
Mazeppa answer'd, 'Ill betide
The school wherein I learn'd to ride!'
Quoth Charles, 'Old Hetman, wherefore so,
Since thou hast learn'd the art so well?'
Mazeppa said, ''T were long to tell;
And we have many a league to go,
With every now and then a blow,
And ten to one at least the foe,
Before our steeds may graze at ease
Beyond the swift Borysthenes.
And, sire, your limbs have need of rest,
And I will be the sentinel
Of this your troop.' — 'But I request,'
Said Sweden's monarch, 'thou wilt tell
This tale of thine, and I may reap,
Perchance, from this the boon of sleep;
For at this moment from my eyes
The hope of present slumber flies.'

'Well, sire, with such a hope, I'll track
My seventy years of memory back.
I think 't was in my twentieth spring, —
Ay, 't was, — when Casimir was king —
John Casimir, — I was his page
Six summers, in my earlier age,
A learned monarch, faith! was he,
And most unlike your majesty:
He made no wars, and did not gain
New realms to lose them back again;
And (save debates in Warsaw's diet)
He reign'd in most unseemly quiet.
Not that he had no cares to vex,
He loved the muses and the sex;
And sometimes these so froward are,
They made him wish himself at war;
But soon his wrath being o'er, he took
Another mistress, or new book.
And then he gave prodigious fêtes —
All Warsaw gather'd round his gates
To gaze upon his splendid court,
And dames, and chiefs, of princely port.
He was the Polish Solomon, —
So sung his poets, all but one,
Who, being unpension'd, made a satire,
And boasted that he could not flatter.
It was a court of jousts and mimes,
Where every courtier tried at rhymes;
Even I for once produced some verses,
And sign'd my odes "Despairing Thyrsis."
There was a certain Palatine,
A count of far and high descent,
Rich as a salt or silver mine;
And he was proud, ye may divine,
As if from heaven he had been sent.
He had such wealth in blood and ore
As few could match beneath the throne;
And he would gaze upon his store,
And o'er his pedigree would pore,
Until by some confusion led,
Which almost look'd like want of head,
He thought their merits were his own.
His wife was not of his opinion —
His junior she by thirty years —
Grew daily tired of his dominion;
And, after wishes, hopes, and fears,
To virtue a few farewell tears,
A restless dream or two, some glances
At Warsaw's youth, some songs, and dances,
Awaited but the usual chances
(Those happy accidents which render
The coldest dames so very tender),
To deck her Count with titles given,
'T is said, as passports into heaven;
But, strange to say, they rarely boast
Of these, who have deserved them most.

V

'I was a goodly stripling then;
At seventy years I so may say,
That there were few, or boys or men,
Who, in my dawning time of day,
Of vassal or of knight's degree,
Could vie in vanities with me.
For I had strength, youth, gaiety,
A port, not like to this ye see,
But smooth, as all is rugged now;
For time, and care, and war, have plough'd
My very soul from out my brow;
And thus I should be disavow'd
By all my kind and kin, could they
Compare my day and yesterday.
This change was wrought, too, long ere age
Had ta'en my features for his page:
With years, ye know, have not declined
My strength, my courage, or my mind,
Or at this hour I should not be
Telling old tales beneath a tree,
With starless skies my canopy.
But let me on: Theresa's form —
Methinks it glides before me now,
Between me and yon chestnut's bough,
The memory is so quick and warm;

And yet I find no words to tell
The shape of her I loved so well.
She had the Asiatic eye,
Such as our Turkish neighbourhood
Hath mingled with our Polish blood,
Dark as above us is the sky;
But through it stole a tender light,
Like the first moonrise of midnight;
Large, dark, and swimming in the stream,
Which seem'd to melt to its own beam;
All love, half languor, and half fire,
Like saints that at the stake expire,
And lift their raptured looks on high
As though it were a joy to die; —
A brow like a midsummer lake,
Transparent with the sun therein,
When waves no murmur dare to make,
And heaven beholds her face within; —
A cheek and lip — but why proceed ?
I loved her then — I love her still;
And such as I am love indeed
In fierce extremes — in good and ill.
But still we love even in our rage,
And haunted to our very age
With the vain shadow of the past,
As is Mazeppa to the last.

VI

'We met, we gazed — I saw, and sigh'd;
She did not speak, and yet replied.
There are ten thousand tones and signs
We hear and see, but none defines —
Involuntary sparks of thought,
Which strike from out the heart o'erwrought
And form a strange intelligence
Alike mysterious and intense,
Which link the burning chain that binds,
Without their will, young hearts and minds;
Conveying, as the electric wire,
We know not how, the absorbing fire.
I saw, and sigh'd — in silence wept;
And still reluctant distance kept,
Until I was made known to her,
And we might then and there confer
Without suspicion — then, even then,
I long'd, and was resolved to speak;
But on my lips they died again,
The accents tremulous and weak,
Until one hour. — There is a game,
A frivolous and foolish play,
Wherewith we while away the day;
It is — I have forgot the name —
And we to this, it seems, were set,
By some strange chance, which I forget.
I reck'd not if I won or lost,
It was enough for me to be
So near to hear, and oh ! to see
The being whom I loved the most.
I watch'd her as a sentinel
(May ours this dark night watch as well !),
Until I saw, and thus it was,
That she was pensive, nor perceived
Her occupation, nor was grieved
Nor glad to lose or gain; but still
Play'd on for hours, as if her will
Yet bound her to the place, though not
That hers might be the winning lot.
Then through my brain the thought did pass
Even as a flash of lightning there,
That there was something in her air
Which would not doom me to despair;
And on the thought my words broke forth,
All incoherent as they were —
Their eloquence was little worth,
But yet she listen'd — 't is enough,
Who listens once will listen twice;
Her heart, be sure, is not of ice,
And one refusal no rebuff.

VII

'I loved, and was beloved again —
They tell me, Sire, you never knew
Those gentle frailties; if 't is true,
I shorten all my joy or pain;
To you 't would seem absurd as vain;
But all men are not born to reign,
Or o'er their passions, or as you,
Thus o'er themselves and nations too.
I am — or rather *was* — a prince,
A chief of thousands, and could lead
Them on where each would foremost bleed;
But could not o'er myself evince
The like control. — But to resume:
I loved, and was beloved again;
In sooth, it is a happy doom,
But yet where happiest ends in pain.
We met in secret, and the hour
Which led me to that lady's bower
Was fiery Expectation's dower.
My days and nights were nothing, all
Except that hour which doth recall
In the long lapse from youth to age
No other like itself — I'd give
The Ukraine back again to live
It o'er once more; and be a page,

The happy page, who was the lord
Of one soft heart and his own sword,
And had no other gem nor wealth
Save nature's gift of youth and health.
We met in secret — doubly sweet,
Some say, they find it so to meet;
I know not that — I would have given
My life but to have call'd her mine
In the full view of earth and heaven;
For I did oft and long repine
That we could only meet by stealth.

VIII

'For lovers there are many eyes,
And such there were on us; the devil
On such occasions should be civil;
The devil! — I 'm loth to do him wrong,
It might be some untoward saint,
Who would not be at rest too long
But to his pious bile gave vent —
But one fair night, some lurking spies
Surprised and seized us both.
The Count was something more than wroth;
I was unarm'd; but if in steel,
All cap-à-pie from head to heel,
What 'gainst their numbers could I do? —
'T was near his castle, far away
From city or from succour near,
And almost on the break of day.
I did not think to see another,
My moments seem'd reduced to few;
And with one prayer to Mary Mother,
And, it may be, a saint or two,
As I resign'd me to my fate,
They led me to the castle gate:
Theresa's doom I never knew,
Our lot was henceforth separate.
An angry man, ye may opine,
Was he, the proud Count Palatine;
And he had reason good to be,
But he was most enraged lest such
An accident should chance to touch
Upon his future pedigree;
Nor less amazed, that such a blot
His noble 'scutcheon should have got,
While he was highest of his line;
Because unto himself he seem'd
The first of men, nor less he deem'd
In others' eyes, and most in mine.
'Sdeath! with a *page* — perchance a king
Had reconciled him to the thing;
But with a stripling of a page!
I felt — but cannot paint his rage.

IX

'"Bring forth the horse!" — the horse was brought;
In truth, he was a noble steed,
A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,
Who look'd as though the speed of thought
Were in his limbs; but he was wild,
Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,
With spur and bridle undefiled —
'T was but a day he had been caught.
And snorting, with erected mane,
And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
In the full foam of wrath and dread
To me the desert-born was led.
They bound me on, that menial throng,
Upon his back with many a thong;
Then loosed him with a sudden lash:
Away! — away! — and on we dash! —
Torrents less rapid and less rash.

X

'Away! — away! — My breath was gone —
I saw not where he hurried on:
'T was scarcely yet the break of day,
And on he foam'd — away! — away!
The last of human sounds which rose,
As I was darted from my foes,
Was the wild shout of savage laughter,
Which on the wind came roaring after
A moment from that rabble rout.
With sudden wrath I wrench'd my head,
And snapp'd the cord, which to the mane
Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,
And, writhing half my form about,
Howl'd back my curse; but 'midst the tread,
The thunder of my courser's speed,
Perchance they did not hear nor heed:
It vexes me, for I would fain
Have paid their insult back again.
I paid it well in after days:
There is not of that castle gate,
Its drawbridge and portcullis' weight,
Stone, bar, moat, bridge, or barrier left;
Nor of its fields a blade of grass,
Save what grows on a ridge of wall,
Where stood the hearth-stone of the hall;
And many a time ye there might pass,
Nor dream that e'er that fortress was.
I saw its turrets in a blaze,
Their crackling battlements all cleft,
And the hot lead pour down like rain
From off the scorch'd and blackening roof,
Whose thickness was not vengeance-proof.

They little thought that day of pain,
When launch'd, as on the lightning's flash,
They bade me to destruction dash,
That one day I should come again,
With twice five thousand horse, to thank
The Count for his uncourteous ride.
They play'd me then a bitter prank,
When, with the wild horse for my guide,
They bound me to his foaming flank.
At length I play'd them one as frank —
For time at last sets all things even —
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong.

XI

'Away, away, my steed and I,
Upon the pinions of the wind,
All human dwellings left behind;
We sped like meteors through the sky,
When with its crackling sound the night
Is chequer'd with the northern light.
Town — village — none were on our track,
But a wild plain of far extent,
And bounded by a forest black;
And, save the scarce seen battlement
On distant heights of some strong hold,
Against the Tartars built of old,
No trace of man: the year before
A Turkish army had march'd o'er;
And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,
The verdure flies the bloody sod.
The sky was dull, and dim, and gray,
And a low breeze crept moaning by —
I could have answer'd with a sigh;
But fast we fled, away, away —
And I could neither sigh nor pray;
And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
Upon the courser's bristling mane.
But, snorting still with rage and fear,
He flew upon his far career:
At times I almost thought, indeed,
He must have slacken'd in his speed;
But no — my bound and slender frame
Was nothing to his angry might,
And merely like a spur became.
Each motion which I made to free
My swoln limbs from their agony
Increased his fury and affright:
I tried my voice, — 't was faint and low,
But yet he swerved as from a blow;
And, starting to each accent, sprang
As from a sudden trumpet's clang.
Meantime my cords were wet with gore,
Which, oozing through my limbs, ran o'er;
And in my tongue the thirst became
A something fierier far than flame.

XII

'We near'd the wild wood: 't was so wide,
I saw no bounds on either side;
'T was studded with old sturdy trees,
That bent not to the roughest breeze
Which howls down from Siberia's waste
And strips the forest in its haste;
But these were few and far between,
Set thick with shrubs more young and green,
Luxuriant with their annual leaves,
Ere strown by those autumnal eves
That nip the forest's foliage dead,
Discolour'd with a lifeless red,
Which stands thereon like stiffen'd gore
Upon the slain when battle 's o'er,
And some long winter's night hath shed
Its frost o'er every tombless head,
So cold and stark the raven's beak
May peck unpierced each frozen cheek.
'T was a wild waste of underwood,
And here and there a chestnut stood,
The strong oak, and the hardy pine;
But far apart — and well it were,
Or else a different lot were mine:
The boughs gave way, and did not tear
My limbs; and I found strength to bear
My wounds already scarr'd with cold —
My bonds forbade to loose my hold.
We rustled through the leaves like wind,
Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves behind;
By night I heard them on the track,
Their troop came hard upon our back,
With their long gallop which can tire
The hound's deep hate and hunter's fire.
Where'er we flew they follow'd on,
Nor left us with the morning sun;
Behind I saw them, scarce a rood,
At day-break winding through the wood,
And through the night had heard their feet
Their stealing, rustling step repeat.
Oh! how I wish'd for spear or sword,
At least to die amidst the horde,
And perish — if it must be so —
At bay, destroying many a foe.
When first my courser's race begun,
I wish'd the goal already won;

But now I doubted strength and speed.
Vain doubt! his swift and savage breed
Had nerved him like the mountain-roe;
Nor faster falls the blinding snow
Which whelms the peasant near the door
Whose threshold he shall cross no more,
Bewilder'd with the dazzling blast,
Than through the forest-paths he past —
Untired, untamed, and worse than wild;
All furious as a favour'd child
Balk'd of its wish; or fiercer still,
A woman piqued who has her will.

XIII

‘The wood was past; ’t was more than noon,
But chill the air although in June;
Or it might be my veins ran cold —
Prolong'd endurance tames the bold;
And I was then not what I seem,
But headlong as a wintry stream,
And wore my feelings out before
I well could count their causes o'er.
And what with fury, fear, and wrath,
The tortures which beset my path,
Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,
Thus bound in nature's nakedness
(Sprung from a race whose rising blood
When stirr'd beyond its calmer mood,
And trodden hard upon, is like
The rattle-snake's in act to strike),
What marvel if this worn-out trunk
Beneath its woes a moment sunk?
The earth gave way, the skies roll'd round,
I seem'd to sink upon the ground;
But err'd, for I was fastly bound.
My heart turn'd sick, my brain grew sore,
And throbb'd awhile, then beat no more:
The skies spun like a mighty wheel;
I saw the trees like drunkards reel,
And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,
Which saw no farther: he who dies
Can die no more than then I died.
O'ertortured by that ghastly ride,
I felt the blackness come and go,
And strove to wake; but could not make
My senses climb up from below.
I felt as on a plank at sea,
When all the waves that dash o'er thee,
At the same time upheave and whelm,
And hurl thee towards a desert realm.
My undulating life was as
The fancied lights that flitting pass
Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when
Fever begins upon the brain;
But soon it pass'd, with little pain,
But a confusion worse than such:
I own that I should deem it much,
Dying, to feel the same again;
And yet I do suppose we must
Feel far more ere we turn to dust.
No matter; I have bared my brow
Full in Death's face — before — and now.

XIV

‘My thoughts came back; where was I? Cold,
And numb, and giddy: pulse by pulse
Life reassumed its lingering hold,
And throb by throb: till grown a pang
Which for a moment would convulse,
My blood reflow'd though thick and chill;
My ear with uncouth noises rang,
My heart began once more to thrill;
My sight return'd, though dim, alas!
And thicken'd, as it were, with glass.
Methought the dash of waves was nigh:
There was a gleam too of the sky,
Studded with stars; — it is no dream;
The wild horse swims the wilder stream!
The bright broad river's gushing tide
Sweeps, winding onward, far and wide,
And we are half-way, struggling o'er
To yon unknown and silent shore.
The waters broke my hollow trance,
And with a temporary strength
My stiffen'd limbs were rebaptized.
My courser's broad breast proudly braves
And dashes off the ascending waves,
And onward we advance!
We reach the slippery shore at length,
A haven I but little prized,
For all behind was dark and drear,
And all before was night and fear.
How many hours of night or day
In those suspended pangs I lay,
I could not tell; I scarcely knew
If this were human breath I drew.

XV

‘With glossy skin, and dripping mane,
And reeling limbs, and reeking flank,
The wild steed's sinewy nerves still strain
Up the repelling bank.
We gain the top: a boundless plain
Spreads through the shadow of the night,
And onward, onward, onward, seems,
Like precipices in our dreams,
To stretch beyond the sight;
And here and there a speck of white,

Or scatter'd spot of dusky green,
In masses broke into the light,
As rose the moon upon my right.
But nought distinctly seen
In the dim waste would indicate
The omen of a cottage gate;
No twinkling taper from afar
Stood like a hospitable star;
Not even an ignis-fatuus rose
To make him merry with my woes:
That very cheat had cheer'd me then!
Although detected, welcome still,
Reminding me, through every ill,
Of the abodes of men.

XVI

'Onward we went — but slack and slow;
His savage force at length o'erspent,
The drooping courser, faint and low,
All feebly foaming went.
A sickly infant had had power
To guide him forward in that hour;
But useless all to me,
His new-born tameness nought avail'd —
My limbs were bound; my force had fail'd,
Perchance, had they been free.
With feeble effort still I tried
To rend the bonds so starkly tied,
But still it was in vain;
My limbs were only wrung the more,
And soon the idle strife gave o'er,
Which but prolong'd their pain.
The dizzy race seem'd almost done,
Although no goal was nearly won:
Some streaks announced the coming sun —
How slow, alas, he came!
Methought that mist of dawning gray
Would never dapple into day;
How heavily it roll'd away —
Before the eastern flame
Rose crimson, and deposed the stars,
And call'd the radiance from their cars,
And fill'd the earth, from his deep throne,
With lonely lustre, all his own.

XVII

'Up rose the sun; the mists were curl'd
Back from the solitary world
Which lay around — behind — before;
What booted it to traverse o'er
Plain, forest, river? Man nor brute,
Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,
Lay in the wild luxuriant soil;
No sign of travel, none of toil;
The very air was mute;
And not an insect's shrill small horn,
Nor matin bird's new voice was borne
From herb nor thicket. Many a werst,
Panting as if his heart would burst,
The weary brute still stagger'd on;
And still we were — or seem'd — alone.
At length, while reeling on our way,
Methought I heard a courser neigh
From out yon tuft of blackening firs.
Is it the wind those branches stirs?
No, no! from out the forest prance
A trampling troop; I see them come!
In one vast squadron they advance!
I strove to cry — my lips were dumb.
The steeds rush on in plunging pride;
But where are they the reins to guide?
A thousand horse — and none to ride!
With flowing tail, and flying mane,
Wide nostrils never stretch'd by pain,
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
And feet that iron never shod,
And flanks unscarr'd by spur or rod,
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o'er the sea,
Came thickly thundering on,
As if our faint approach to meet.
The sight re-nerved my courser's feet,
A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
A moment, with a faint low neigh,
He answer'd, and then fell;
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
And reeking limbs immoveable —
His first and last career is done!
On came the troop — they saw him stoop,
They saw me strangely bound along
His back with many a bloody thong.
They stop — they start — they snuff the air,
Gallop a moment here and there,
Approach, retire, wheel round and round,
Then plunging back with sudden bound,
Headed by one black mighty steed
Who seem'd the patriarch of his breed,
Without a single speck or hair
Of white upon his shaggy hide.
They snort — they foam — neigh — swerve aside,
And backward to the forest fly,
By instinct, from a human eye.
They left me there to my despair,
Link'd to the dead and stiffening wretch,
Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,
Relieved from that unwonted weight,
From whence I could not extricate
Nor him nor me — and there we lay
The dying on the dead!

I little deem'd another day
Would see my houseless, helpless head.

'And there from morn till twilight bound,
I felt the heavy hours toil round,
With just enough of life to see
My last of suns go down on me,
In hopeless certainty of mind,
That makes us feel at length resign'd
To that which our foreboding years
Presents the worst and last of fears
Inevitable — even a boon,
Nor more unkind for coming soon;
Yet shunn'd and dreaded with such care,
As if it only were a snare
That prudence might escape:
At times both wish'd for and implored,
At times sought with self-pointed sword,
Yet still a dark and hideous close
To even intolerable woes,
And welcome in no shape.
And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure,
They who have revell'd beyond measure
In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure,
Die calm, or calmer oft than he
Whose heritage was misery:
For he who hath in turn run through
All that was beautiful and new,
Hath nought to hope, and nought to leave;
And, save the future (which is view'd
Not quite as men are base or good,
But as their nerves may be endued),
With nought perhaps to grieve: —
The wretch still hopes his woes must end,
And Death, whom he should deem his friend,
Appears, to his distemper'd eyes,
Arrived to rob him of his prize,
The tree of his new Paradise.
To-morrow would have given him all,
Repaid his pangs, repair'd his fall;
To-morrow would have been the first
Of days no more deplored or curst,
But bright, and long, and beckoning years,
Seen dazzling through the mist of tears,
Guerdon of many a painful hour;
To-morrow would have given him power
To rule, to shine, to smite, to save —
And must it dawn upon his grave?

XVIII

'The sun was sinking — still I lay
Chain'd to the chill and stiffening steed;
I thought to mingle there our clay;
And my dim eyes of death had need,
No hope arose of being freed.
I cast my last looks up the sky,
And there between me and the sun
I saw the expecting raven fly,
Who scarce would wait till both should die
Ere his repast begun.
He flew, and perch'd, then flew once more,
And each time nearer than before;
I saw his wing through twilight flit,
And once so near me he alit
I could have smote, but lack'd the strength;
But the slight motion of my hand,
And feeble scratching of the sand,
The exerted throat's faint struggling noise,
Which scarcely could be call'd a voice,
Together scared him off at length. —
I know no more — my latest dream
Is something of a lovely star
Which fix'd my dull eyes from afar,
And went and came with wandering beam,
And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense
Sensation of recurring sense,
And then subsiding back to death,
And then again a little breath,
A little thrill, a short suspense,
An icy sickness curdling o'er
My heart, and sparks that cross'd my brain —
A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,
A sigh, and nothing more.

XIX

'I woke — Where was I? — Do I see
A human face look down on me?
And doth a roof above me close?
Do these limbs on a couch repose?
Is this a chamber where I lie?
And is it mortal, yon bright eye
That watches me with gentle glance?
I closed my own again once more,
As doubtful that the former trance
Could not as yet be o'er.
A slender girl, long-hair'd, and tall,
Sate watching by the cottage wall:
The sparkle of her eye I caught,
Even with my first return of thought;
For ever and anon she threw
A prying, pitying glance on me
With her black eyes so wild and free.
I gazed, and gazed, until I knew
No vision it could be;
But that I lived, and was released
From adding to the vulture's feast.
And when the Cossack maid beheld
My heavy eyes at length unseal'd,

She smiled — and I essay'd to speak,
But fail'd — and she approach'd, and made
With lip and finger signs that said,
I must not strive as yet to break
The silence, till my strength should be
Enough to leave my accents free.
And then her hand on mine she laid,
And smooth'd the pillow for my head,
And stole along on tiptoe tread,
And gently oped the door, and spake
In whispers — ne'er was voice so sweet!
Even music follow'd her light feet.
But those she call'd were not awake,
And she went forth; but, ere she pass'd,
Another look on me she cast,
Another sign she made, to say,
That I had nought to fear, that all
Were near at my command or call,
And she would not delay
Her due return: — while she was gone,
Methought I felt too much alone.

XX

'She came with mother and with sire —
What need of more? — I will not tire
With long recital of the rest,
Since I became the Cossack's guest.
They found me senseless on the plain,
They bore me to the nearest hut,
They brought me into life again,
Me — one day o'er their realm to reign!
Thus the vain fool who strove to glut
His rage, refining on my pain,
Sent me forth to the wilderness,
Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,
To pass the desert to a throne, —
What mortal his own doom may guess?
Let none despond, let none despair!
To-morrow the Borysthenes
May see our coursers graze at ease
Upon his Turkish bank, — and never
Had I such welcome for a river
As I shall yield when safely there.
Comrades, good night!' — The Hetman threw
His length beneath the oak-tree shade,
With leafy couch already made,
A bed nor comfortless nor new
To him who took his rest whene'er
The hour arrived, no matter where:
His eyes the hastening slumbers steep.
And if ye marvel Charles forgot
To thank his tale, *he* wonder'd not, —
The king had been an hour asleep.

THE ISLAND

OR, CHRISTIAN AND HIS COMRADES

The foundation of the following story will be found partly in Lieutenant Bligh's *Narrative of the Mutiny and Seizure of the Bounty, in the South Seas, in 1789;* and partly in *Mariner's Account of the Tonga Islands.*

GENOA, 1823.

CANTO THE FIRST

I

THE morning watch was come; the vessel lay
Her course, and gently made her liquid way.
The cloven billow flash'd from off her prow
In furrows form'd by that majestic plough;
The waters with their world were all before;
Behind, the South Sea's many an islet shore.
The quiet night, now dappling, 'gan to wane,
Dividing darkness from the dawning main;
The dolphins, not unconscious of the day,
Swam high, as eager of the coming ray;
The stars from broader beams began to creep,
And lift their shining eyelids from the deep;
The sail resumed its lately shadow'd white,
And the wind flutter'd with a freshening flight;
The purpling ocean owns the coming sun,
But ere he break — a deed is to be done.

II

The gallant chief within his cabin slept,
Secure in those by whom the watch was kept.
His dreams were of Old England's welcome shore,
Of toils rewarded, and of dangers o'er;
His name was added to the glorious roll
Of those who search the storm-surrounded Pole.
The worst was over, and the rest seem'd sure,
And why should not his slumber be secure?
Alas! his deck was trod by unwilling feet,
And wilder hands would hold the vessel's sheet;

Young hearts, which languish'd for some sunny isle,
Where summer years and summer women smile;
Men without country, who, too long estranged,
Had found no native home, or found it changed,
And, half uncivilised, preferr'd the cave
Of some soft savage to the uncertain wave —
The gushing fruits that nature gave untill'd;
The wood without a path but where they will'd;
The field o'er which promiscuous Plenty pour'd
Her horn; the equal land without a lord;
The wish — which ages have not yet subdued
In man — to have no master save his mood;
The earth, whose mine was on its face, unsold,
The glowing sun and produce all its gold;
The freedom which can call each grot a home;
The general garden, where all steps may roam,
Where Nature owns a nation as her child,
Exulting in the enjoyment of the wild;
Their shells, their fruits, the only wealth they know,
Their unexploring navy, the canoe;
Their sport, the dashing breakers and the chase;
Their strangest sight, an European face: —
Such was the country which these strangers yearn'd
To see again, a sight they dearly earn'd.

III

Awake, bold Bligh ! the foe is at the gate !
Awake ! awake ! — Alas, it is too late !
Fiercely beside thy cot the mutineer
Stands, and proclaims the reign of rage and fear.
Thy limbs are bound, the bayonet at thy breast;
The hands, which trembled at thy voice, arrest;
Dragg'd o'er the deck, no more at thy command
The obedient helm shall veer, the sail expand.
That savage spirit, which would lull by wrath
Its desperate escape from duty's path,
Glares round thee, in the scarce believing eyes
Of those who fear the chief they sacrifice:
For ne'er can man his conscience all assuage,
Unless he drain the wine of passion — rage.

IV

In vain, not silenced by the eye of death,
Thou call'st the loyal with thy menaced breath:
They come not; they are few, and, overawed,
Must acquiesce, while sterner hearts applaud.
In vain thou dost demand the cause; a curse
Is all the answer, with the threat of worse.
Full in thine eyes is waved the glittering blade,
Close to thy throat the pointed bayonet laid.
The levell'd muskets circle round thy breast
In hands as steel'd to do the deadly rest.
Thou darest them to their worst, exclaiming — 'Fire !'
But they who pitied not could yet admire;
Some lurking remnant of their former awe
Restrain'd them longer than their broken law;
They would not dip their souls at once in blood,
But left thee to the mercies of the flood.

V

'Hoist out the boat !' was now the leader's cry;
And who dare answer 'No !' to Mutiny,
In the first dawning of the drunken hour,
The Saturnalia of unhoped-for power ?
The boat is lower'd with all the haste of hate,
With its slight plank between thee and thy fate;
Her only cargo such a scant supply
As promises the death their hands deny;
And just enough of water and of bread
To keep, some days, the dying from the dead.
Some cordage, canvass, sails, and lines, and twine,
But treasures all to hermits of the brine,

Were added after, to the earnest prayer
Of those who saw no hope, save sea and air;
And last, that trembling vassal of the Pole —
The feeling compass — Navigation's soul.

VI

And now the self-elected chief finds time
To stun the first sensation of his crime,
And raise it in his followers — 'Ho! the bowl!'
Lest passion should return to reason's shoal.
'Brandy for heroes!' Burke could once exclaim —
No doubt a liquid path to epic fame;
And such the new-born heroes found it here,
And drain'd the draught with an applauding cheer.
'Huzza! for Otaheite!' was the cry.
How strange such shouts from sons of Mutiny!
The gentle island, and the genial soil,
The friendly hearts, the feasts without a toil,
The courteous manners but from nature caught,
The wealth unhoarded, and the love unbought, —
Could these have charms for rudest sea-boys, driven
Before the mast by every wind of heaven?
And now, even now prepared with others' woes
To earn mild virtue's vain desire, repose?
Alas, such is our nature! all but aim
At the same end by pathways not the same;
Our means, our birth, our nation, and our name,
Our fortune, temper, even our outward frame,
Are far more potent o'er our yielding clay
Than aught we know beyond our little day.
Yet still there whispers the small voice within,
Heard through Gain's silence, and o'er Glory's din:
Whatever creed be taught or land be trod,
Man's conscience is the oracle of God.

VII

The launch is crowded with the faithful few
Who wait their chief, a melancholy crew.
But some remain'd reluctant on the deck
Of that proud vessel — now a moral wreck —
And view'd their captain's fate with piteous eyes;
While others scoff'd his augur'd miseries,
Sneer'd at the prospect of his pigmy sail,
And the slight bark so laden and so frail.
The tender nautilus, who steers his prow,
The sea-born sailor of his shell canoe,
The ocean Mab, the fairy of the sea,
Seems far less fragile, and, alas! more free.
He, when the lightning-wing'd tornadoes sweep
The surge, is safe (his port is in the deep)
And triumphs o'er the armadas of mankind,
Which shake the world, yet crumble in the wind.

VIII

When all was now prepared, the vessel clear,
Which hail'd her master in the mutineer —
A seaman, less obdurate than his mates,
Show'd the vain pity which but irritates;
Watch'd his late chieftain with exploring eye,
And told, in signs, repentant sympathy;
Held the moist shaddock to his parchèd mouth,
Which felt exhaustion's deep and bitter drouth:
But soon observed, this guardian was withdrawn,
Nor further mercy clouds rebellion's dawn.
Then forward stepp'd the bold and froward boy
His chief had cherish'd only to destroy,
And, pointing to the helpless prow beneath,
Exclaim'd, 'Depart at once! delay is death!'
Yet then, even then, his feelings ceased not all:
In that last moment could a word recall
Remorse for the black deed as yet half done,
And what he hid from many show'd to one.
When Bligh in stern reproach demanded where
Was now his grateful sense of former care?
Where all his hopes to see his name aspire,
And blazon Britain's thousand glories higher?

His feverish lips thus broke their gloomy spell,
‘’T is that! ’t is that! I am in hell! in hell!’
No more he said; but urging to the bark
His chief, commits him to his fragile ark;
These the sole accents from his tongue that fell,
But volumes lurk’d below his fierce farewell.

IX

The arctic sun rose broad above the wave;
The breeze now sank, now whisper’d from his cave;
As on the Æolian harp, his fitful wings
Now swell’d, now flutter’d o’er his ocean strings.
With slow, despairing oar, the abandon’d skiff
Ploughs its drear progress to the scarce-seen cliff,
Which lifts its peak a cloud above the main:
That boat and ship shall never meet again!
But ’t is not mine to tell their tale of grief,
Their constant peril, and their scant relief;
Their days of danger, and their nights of pain;
Their manly courage even when deem’d in vain;
The sapping famine, rendering scarce a son
Known to his mother in the skeleton;
The ills that lessen’d still their little store,
And starved even Hunger till he wrung no more;
The varying frowns and favours of the deep,
That now almost ingulfs, then leaves to creep
With crazy oar and shatter’d strength along
The tide that yields reluctant to the strong;
The incessant fever of that arid thirst
Which welcomes, as a well, the clouds that burst
Above their naked bones, and feels delight
In the cold drenching of the stormy night,
And from the outspread canvass gladly wrings
A drop to moisten life’s all-gasping springs;
The savage foe escaped, to seek again
More hospitable shelter from the main;
The ghastly spectres which were doom’d at last
To tell as true a tale of dangers past,
As ever the dark annals of the deep
Disclosed for man to dread or woman weep.

X

We leave them to their fate, but not unknown
Nor unredress’d. Revenge may have her own:
Roused discipline aloud proclaims their cause,
And injured navies urge their broken laws.
Pursue we on his track the mutineer,
Whom distant vengeance had not taught to fear.
Wide o’er the wave — away! away! away!
Once more his eyes shall hail the welcome bay;
Once more the happy shores without a law
Receive the outlaws whom they lately saw;
Nature, and Nature’s goddess, woman, woos
To lands where, save their conscience, none accuse;
Where all partake the earth without dispute,
And bread itself is gather’d as a fruit;
Where none contest the fields, the woods, the streams: —
The goldless age, where gold disturbs no dreams,
Inhabits or inhabited the shore,
Till Europe taught them better than before:
Bestow’d her customs, and amended theirs,
But left her vices also to their heirs.
Away with this! behold them as they were
Do good with Nature, or with Nature err.
‘Huzza! for Otaheite!’ was the cry,
As stately swept the gallant vessel by.
The breeze springs up; the lately flapping sail
Extends its arch before the growing gale;
In swifter ripples stream aside the seas,
Which her bold bow flings off with dashing ease.
Thus Argo plough’d the Euxine’s virgin foam;
But those she wafted still look’d back to home —
These spurn their country with their rebel bark,
And fly her as the raven fled the ark:
And yet they seek to nestle with the dove,
And tame their fiery spirits down to love.

CANTO THE SECOND

I

How pleasant were the songs of Toobonai,
When summer's sun went down the coral bay!
Come, let us to the islet's softest shade,
And hear the warbling birds! the damsels said:
The wood-dove from the forest depth shall coo,
Like voices of the gods from Bolotoo;
We'll cull the flowers that grow above the dead,
For these most bloom where rests the warrior's head;
And we will sit in twilight's face, and see
The sweet moon glancing through the tooa tree,
The lofty accents of whose sighing bough
Shall sadly please us as we lean below;
Or climb the steep, and view the surf in vain
Wrestle with rocky giants o'er the main,
Which spurn in columns back the baffled spray.
How beautiful are these! how happy they,
Who, from the toil and tumult of their lives,
Steal to look down where nought but ocean strives!
Even he too loves at times the blue lagoon,
And smooths his ruffled mane beneath the moon.

II

Yes, from the sepulchre we'll gather flowers,
Then feast like spirits in their promised bowers,
Then plunge and revel in the rolling surf,
Then lay our limbs along the tender turf,
And, wet and shining from the sportive toil,
Anoint our bodies with the fragrant oil,
And plait our garlands gather'd from the grave,
And wear the wreaths that sprung from out the brave.
But lo! night comes, the Mooa woos us back,
The sound of mats are heard along our track.
Anon the torchlight dance shall fling its sheen
In flashing mazes o'er the Marly's green;
And we too will be there; we too recall
The memory bright with many a festival,
Ere Fiji blew the shell of war, when foes
For the first time were wafted in canoes.
Alas! for them the flower of mankind bleeds;
Alas! for them our fields are rank with weeds:
Forgotten is the rapture, or unknown,
Of wandering with the moon and love alone.
But be it so: — *they* taught us how to wield
The club, and rain our arrows o'er the field:
Now let them reap the harvest of their art!
But feast to-night! to-morrow we depart.
Strike up the dance! the cava bowl fill high!
Drain every drop! — to-morrow we may die.
In summer garments be our limbs array'd;
Around our waists the tappa's white display'd;
Thick wreaths shall form our coronal, like spring's,
And round our necks shall glance the hooni strings;
So shall their brighter hues contrast the glow
Of the dusk bosoms that beat high below.

III

But now the dance is o'er — yet stay awhile;
Ah, pause! nor yet put out the social smile.
To-morrow for the Mooa we depart,
But not to-night — to-night is for the heart.
Again bestow the wreaths we gently woo,
Ye young enchantresses of gay Licoo!
How lovely are your forms! how every sense
Bows to your beauties, soften'd, but intense,
Like to the flowers on Mataloco's steep,
Which fling their fragrance far athwart the deep! —
We too will see Licoo; but — oh! my heart! —
What do I say? — to-morrow we depart!

IV

Thus rose a song, the harmony of times
Before the winds blew Europe o'er these climes.
True, they had vices (such are Nature's growth)
But only the barbarian's — we have both:
The sordor of civilisation, mix'd
With all the savage which man's fall hath fix'd.

Who hath not seen Dissimulation's reign,
The prayers of Abel link'd to deeds of Cain?
Who such would see may from his lattice view
The Old World more degraded than the New,—
Now *new* no more, save where Columbia rears
Twin giants, born by Freedom to her spheres,
Where Chimborazo, over air, earth, wave,
Glares with his Titan eye, and sees no slave.

V

Such was this ditty of Tradition's days,
Which to the dead a lingering fame conveys
In song, where fame as yet hath left no sign
Beyond the sound whose charm is half divine;
Which leaves no record to the sceptic eye,
But yields young history all to harmony;
A boy Achilles, with the centaur's lyre
In hand, to teach him to surpass his sire.
For one long-cherish'd ballad's simple stave,
Rung from the rock, or mingled with the wave,
Or from the bubbling streamlet's grassy side,
Or gathering mountain echoes as they glide,
Hath greater power o'er each true heart and ear,
Than all the columns Conquest's minions rear;
Invites, when hieroglyphics are a theme
For sages' labours or the student's dream;
Attracts, when History's volumes are a toil,—
The first, the freshest bud of Feeling's soil.
Such was this rude rhyme—rhyme is of the rude;
But such inspired the Norseman's solitude,
Who came and conquer'd; such, wherever rise
Lands which no foes destroy or civilise,
Exist: and what can our accomplish'd art
Of verse do more than reach the awaken'd heart?

VI

And sweetly now those untaught melodies
Broke the luxurious silence of the skies,
The sweet siesta of a summer day,
The tropic afternoon of Toobonai,
When every flower was bloom, and air was balm,
And the first breath began to stir the palm,
The first yet voiceless wind to urge the wave
All gently to refresh the thirsty cave,
Where sat the songstress with the stranger boy,
Who taught her passion's desolating joy,
Too powerful over every heart, but most
O'er those who know not how it may be lost;—
O'er those who, burning in the new-born fire,
Like martyrs revel in their funeral pyre,
With such devotion to their ecstasy
That life knows no such rapture as to die:
And die they do; for earthly life has nought
Match'd with that burst of nature, even in thought;
And all our dreams of better life above
But close in one eternal gush of love.

VII

There sat the gentle savage of the wild,
In growth a woman, though in years a child,
As childhood dates within our colder clime
Where nought is ripen'd rapidly save crime;
The infant of an infant world, as pure
From nature—lovely, warm, and premature;
Dusky like night, but night with all her stars;
Or cavern sparkling with its native spars;
With eyes that were a language and a spell,
A form like Aphrodite's in her shell,
With all her loves around her on the deep,
Voluptuous as the first approach of sleep;
Yet full of life—for through her tropic cheek
The blush would make its way, and all but speak;
The sun-born blood suffused her neck, and threw
O'er her clear nut-brown skin a lucid hue,
Like coral reddening through the darken'd wave,
Which draws the diver to the crimson cave.

Such was this daughter of the southern seas,
Herself a billow in her energies,
To bear the bark of others' happiness,
Nor feel a sorrow till their joy grew less.
Her wild and warm yet faithful bosom knew
No joy like what it gave; her hopes ne'er drew
Aught from experience, that chill touchstone whose
Sad proof reduces all things from their hues.
She fear'd no ill, because she knew it not,
Or what she knew was soon — too soon — forgot.
Her smiles and tears had pass'd, as light winds pass
O'er lakes to ruffle, not destroy, their glass,
Whose depths unsearch'd, and fountains from the hill,
Restore their surface in itself so still,
Until the earthquake tear the naiad's cave,
Root up the spring, and trample on the wave,
And crush the living waters to a mass,
The amphibious desert of the dank morass!
And must their fate be hers? The eternal change
But grasps humanity with quicker range;
And they who fall but fall as worlds will fall,
To rise, if just, a spirit o'er them all.

VIII

And who is he? the blue-eyed northern child
Of isles more known to man, but scarce less wild;
The fair-hair'd offspring of the Hebrides,
Where roars the Pentland with its whirling seas;
Rock'd in his cradle by the roaring wind,
The tempest-born in body and in mind,
His young eyes opening on the ocean-foam
Had from that moment deem'd the deep his home,
The giant comrade of his pensive moods,
The sharer of his craggy solitudes,
The only Mentor of his youth where'er
His bark was borne; the sport of wave and air;
A careless thing, who placed his choice in chance,
Nursed by the legends of his land's romance;
Eager to hope, but not less firm to bear,
Acquainted with all feelings save despair.
Placed in the Arab's clime, he would have been
As bold a rover as the sands have seen,
And braved their thirst with as enduring lip
As Ishmael, wafted on his desert-ship;
Fix'd upon Chili's shore, a proud cacique;
On Hellas' mountains, a rebellious Greek;
Born in a tent, perhaps a Tamerlane;
Bred to a throne, perhaps unfit to reign.
For the same soul that rends its path to sway,
If rear'd to such, can find no further prey
Beyond itself, and must retrace its way,
Plunging for pleasure into pain: the same
Spirit which made a Nero Rome's worst shame,
A humbler state and discipline of heart
Had form'd his glorious namesake's counterpart;
But grant his vices, grant them all his own,
How small their theatre without a throne!

IX

Thou smilest; — these comparisons seem high
To those who scan all things with dazzled eye;
Link'd with the unknown name of one whose doom
Has nought to do with glory or with Rome,
With Chili, Hellas, or with Araby; —
Thou smilest? — Smile; 't is better thus than sigh;
Yet such he might have been; he was a man,
A soaring spirit, ever in the van,
A patriot hero or despotic chief,
To form a nation's glory or its grief,
Born under auspices which make us more
Or less than we delight to ponder o'er.
But these are visions: say, what was he here?
A blooming boy, a truant mutineer:
The fair-hair'd Torquil, free as ocean's spray,
The husband of the bride of Toobonai.

X

By Neuha's side he sate, and watch'd the waters, —
Neuha, the sun-flower of the island daughters,

Highborn (a birth at which the herald smiles,
Without a scutcheon for these secret isles),
Of a long race, the valiant and the free,
The naked knights of savage chivalry,
Whose grassy cairns ascend along the shore;
And thine — I 've seen — Achilles ! do no more.
She, when the thunder-bearing strangers came,
In vast canoes, begirt with bolts of flame,
Topp'd with tall trees, which, loftier than the palm,
Seem'd rooted in the deep amidst its calm:
But when the winds awaken'd, shot forth wings
Broad as the cloud along the horizon flings,
And sway'd the waves, like cities of the sea,
Making the very billows look less free; —
She, with her paddling oar and dancing prow,
Shot through the surf, like reindeer through the snow,
Swift-gliding o'er the breaker's whitening edge,
Light as a nereid in her ocean sledge,
And gazed and wonder'd at the giant hulk,
Which heaved from wave to wave its trampling bulk.
The anchor dropp'd; it lay along the deep,
Like a huge lion in the sun asleep,
While round it swarm'd the proas' flitting chain,
Like summer bees that hum around his mane.

XI

The white man landed ! — need the rest be told ?
The New World stretch'd its dusk hand to the Old;
Each was to each a marvel, and the tie
Of wonder warm'd to better sympathy.
Kind was the welcome of the sun-born sires,
And kinder still their daughters' gentler fires.
Their union grew: the children of the storm
Found beauty link'd with many a dusky form;
While these in turn admired the paler glow,
Which seem'd so white in climes that knew no snow.
The chase, the race, the liberty to roam,
The soil where every cottage show'd a home;
The sea-spread net, the lightly-launch'd canoe,
Which stemm'd the studded archipelago,
O'er whose blue bosom rose the starry isles;
The healthy slumber earn'd by sportive toils;
The palm, the loftiest dryad of the woods,
Within whose bosom infant Bacchus broods,
While eagles scarce build higher than the crest
Which shadows o'er the vineyard in her breast;
The cava feast, the yam, the cocoa's root,
Which bears at once the cup and milk and fruit;
The bread-tree, which, without the ploughshare, yields
The unreap'd harvest of unfurrow'd fields,
And bakes its unadulterated loaves
Without a furnace in unpurchased groves,
And flings off famine from its fertile breast,
A priceless market for the gathering guest; —
These, with the luxuries of seas and woods,
The airy joys of social solitudes,
Tamed each rude wanderer to the sympathies
Of those who were more happy, if less wise,
Did more than Europe's discipline had done,
And civilised Civilisation's son !

XII

Of these, and there was many a willing pair,
Neuha and Torquil were not the least fair:
Both children of the isles, though distant far;
Both born beneath a sea-presiding star;
Both nourish'd amidst nature's native scenes,
Loved to the last, whatever intervenes
Between us and our childhood's sympathy,
Which still reverts to what first caught the eye.
He who first met the Highlands' swelling blue
Will love each peak that shows a kindred hue,
Hail in each crag a friend's familiar face,
And clasp the mountain in his mind's embrace.
Long have I roam'd through lands which are not mine,
Adored the Alp, and loved the Apennine,

Revered Parnassus, and beheld the steep
Jove's Ida and Olympus crown the deep:
But 't was not all long ages' lore, nor all
Their nature held me in their thrilling thrall;
The infant rapture still survived the boy,
And Loch-na-gar with Ida look'd o'er Troy,
Mix'd Celtic memories with the Phrygian mount,
And Highland linns with Castalie's clear fount.
Forgive me, Homer's universal shade!
Forgive me, Phœbus! that my fancy stray'd;
The north and nature taught me to adore
Your scenes sublime, from those beloved before.

XIII

The love which maketh all things fond and fair,
The youth which makes one rainbow of the air,
The dangers past that make even man enjoy
The pause in which he ceases to destroy,
The mutual beauty which the sternest feel
Strike to their hearts like lightning to the steel,
United the half savage and the whole,
The maid and boy, in one absorbing soul.
No more the thundering memory of the fight
Wrapp'd his wean'd bosom in its dark delight;
No more the irksome restlessness of rest
Disturb'd him like the eagle in her nest,
Whose whetted beak and far-pervading eye
Darts for a victim over all the sky.
His heart was tamed to that voluptuous state,
At once Elysian and effeminate,
Which leaves no laurels o'er the hero's urn —
These wither when for aught save blood they burn;
Yet when their ashes in their nook are laid,
Doth not the myrtle leave as sweet a shade?
Had Cæsar known but Cleopatra's kiss,
Rome had been free, the world had not been his.
And what have Cæsar's deeds and Cæsar's fame
Done for the earth? We feel them in our shame:
The gory sanction of his glory stains
The rust which tyrants cherish on our chains.
Though Glory, Nature, Reason, Freedom, bid
Roused millions do what single Brutus did —
Sweep these mere mock-birds of the despot's song
From the tall bough where they have perch'd so long,
Still are we hawk'd at by such mousing owls,
And take for falcons those ignoble fowls,
When but a word of freedom would dispel
These bugbears, as their terrors show too well.

XIV

Rapt in the fond forgetfulness of life,
Neuha, the South Sea girl, was all a wife,
With no distracting world to call her off
From love; with no society to scoff
At the new transient flame; no babbling crowd
Of coxcombry in admiration loud,
Or with adulterous whisper to alloy
Her duty, and her glory, and her joy.
With faith and feelings naked as her form,
She stood as stands a rainbow in a storm,
Changing its hues with bright variety,
But still expanding lovelier o'er the sky,
Howe'er its arch may swell, its colours move,
The cloud-compelling harbinger of love.

XV

Here, in this grotto of the wave-worn shore,
They pass'd the tropic's red meridian o'er;
Nor long the hours — they never paused o'er time,
Unbroken by the clock's funereal chime,
Which deals the daily pittance of our span
And points and mocks with iron laugh at man.
What deem'd they of the future or the past?
The present, like a tyrant, held them fast.

Their hour-glass was the sea-sand, and the tide,
Like her smooth billow, saw their moments glide;
Their clock the sun, in his unbounded tow'r;
They reckon'd not, whose day was but an hour.
The nightingale, their only vesper-bell,
Sung sweetly to the rose the day's farewell;
The broad sun set, but not with lingering sweep,
As in the north he mellows o'er the deep;
But fiery, full, and fierce, as if he left
The world for ever, earth of light bereft,
Plunged with red forehead down along the wave,
As dives a hero headlong to his grave.
Then rose they, looking first along the skies,
And then for light into each other's eyes,
Wondering that summer show'd so brief a sun,
And asking if indeed the day were done.

XVI

And let not this seem strange: the devotee
Lives not in earth, but in his ecstasy;
Around him days and worlds are heedless driven,
His soul is gone before his dust to heaven.
Is love less potent? No — his path is trod,
Alike uplifted gloriously to God;
Or link'd to all we know of heaven below,
The other better self, whose joy or woe
Is more than ours; the all-absorbing flame
Which, kindled by another, grows the same,
Wrapp'd in one blaze; the pure, yet funeral pile,
Where gentle hearts, like Bramins, sit and smile.
How often we forget all time, when lone,
Admiring Nature's universal throne,
Her woods, her wilds, her waters, the intense
Reply of *hers* to our intelligence!
Live not the stars and mountains? Are the waves
Without a spirit? Are the dropping caves
Without a feeling in their silent tears?
No, no; — they woo and clasp us to their spheres,
Dissolve this clog and clod of clay before
Its hour, and merge our soul in the great shore.
Strip off this fond and false identity! —
Who thinks of self, when gazing on the sky?
And who, though gazing lower, ever thought,
In the young moments ere the heart is taught
Time's lesson, of man's baseness or his own?
All nature is his realm, and love his throne.

XVII

Neuha arose, and Torquil: twilight's hour
Came sad and softly to their rocky bower,
Which, kindling by degrees its dewy spars,
Echoed their dim light to the mustering stars.
Slowly the pair, partaking nature's calm,
Sought out their cottage built beneath the palm;
Now smiling and now silent, as the scene;
Lovely as Love — the spirit! — when serene.
The Ocean scarce spoke louder with his swell,
Than breathes his mimic murmurer in the shell,
As, far divided from his parent deep,
The sea-born infant cries, and will not sleep,
Raising his little plaint in vain, to rave
For the broad bosom of his nursing wave.
The woods droop'd darkly, as inclined to rest,
The tropic bird wheel'd rockward to his nest,
And the blue sky spread round them like a lake
Of peace, where Piety her thirst might slake.

XVIII

But through the palm and plantain, hark, a voice!
Not such as would have been a lover's choice,
In such an hour, to break the air so still;
No dying night-breeze, harping o'er the hill,
Striking the strings of nature, rock and tree,
Those best and earliest lyres of harmony,
With Echo for their chorus; nor the alarm
Of the loud war-whoop to dispel the charm;
Nor the soliloquy of the hermit owl,
Exhaling all his solitary soul,
The dim, though large-eyed wingèd anchorite
Who peals his dreary pæan o'er the night; —
But a loud, long, and naval whistle, shrill
As ever started through a sea-bird's bill;

And then a pause, and then a hoarse 'Hillo!
Torquil, my boy! what cheer? Ho! brother, ho!'
'Who hails?' cried Torquil, following with his eye
The sound. 'Here's one,' was all the brief reply.

XIX

But here the herald of the self-same mouth
Came breathing o'er the aromatic south,
Not like a 'bed of violets' on the gale,
But such as wafts its cloud o'er grog or ale,
Borne from a short frail pipe, which yet had blown
Its gentle odours over either zone,
And, puff'd where'er winds rise or waters roll,
Had wafted smoke from Portsmouth to the Pole,
Opposed its vapour as the lightning flash'd,
And reek'd, 'midst mountain-billows unabash'd,
To Æolus a constant sacrifice,
Through every change of all the varying skies.
And what was he who bore it? — I may err,
But deem him sailor or philosopher.
Sublime tobacco! which from east to west
Cheers the tar's labour or the Turkman's rest;
Which on the Moslem's ottoman divides
His hours, and rivals opium and his brides;
Magnificent in Stamboul, but less grand,
Though not less loved, in Wapping or the Strand;
Divine in hookas, glorious in a pipe,
When tipp'd with amber, mellow, rich, and ripe;
Like other charmers, wooing the caress
More dazzlingly when daring in full dress;
Yet thy true lovers more admire by far
Thy naked beauties — Give me a cigar!

XX

Through the approaching darkness of the wood
A human figure broke the solitude,
Fantastically, it may be, array'd,
A seaman in a savage masquerade;
Such as appears to rise out from the deep
When o'er the line the merry vessels sweep,
And the rough saturnalia of the tar
Flock o'er the deck, in Neptune's borrow'd car;
And, pleased, the god of ocean sees his name
Revive once more, though but in mimic game
Of his true sons, who riot in the breeze
Undreamt of in his native Cyclades.
Still the old god delights, from out the main,
To snatch some glimpses of his ancient reign.
Our sailor's jacket, though in ragged trim,
His constant pipe, which never yet burn'd dim,
His foremast air, and somewhat rolling gait,
Like his dear vessel, spoke his former state;
But then a sort of kerchief round his head,
Not over-tightly bound, nor nicely spread;
And, 'stead of trousers (ah! too early torn!
For even the mildest woods will have their thorn)
A curious sort of somewhat scanty mat
Now served for inexpressibles and hat;
His naked feet and neck, and sunburnt face,
Perchance might suit alike with either race.
His arms were all his own, our Europe's growth,
Which two worlds bless for civilising both;
The musket swung behind his shoulders broad,
And somewhat stoop'd by his marine abode,
But brawny as the boar's; and hung beneath,
His cutlass droop'd, unconscious of a sheath,
Or lost or worn away; his pistols were
Link'd to his belt, a matrimonial pair
(Let not this metaphor appear a scoff,
Though one miss'd fire, the other would go off);
These, with a bayonet, not so free from rust
As when the arm-chest held its brighter trust,
Completed his accoutrements, as Night
Survey'd him in his garb heteroclite.

XXI

'What cheer, Ben Bunting?' cried (when in full view
Our new acquaintance) Torquil. 'Aught of new?'

'Ey, ey!' quoth Ben, 'not new, but news enow;
A strange sail in the offing.'—'Sail! and how?
What! could you make her out? It cannot be;
I 've seen no rag of canvass on the sea.'
'Belike,' said Ben, 'you might not from the bay,
But from the bluff-head, where I watch'd to-day,
I saw her in the doldrums; for the wind
Was light and baffling.'—'When the sun declined
Where lay she? had she anchor'd?'—'No, but still
She bore down on us, till the wind grew still.'
'Her flag?'—'I had no glass: but fore and aft,
Egad! she seem'd a wicked-looking craft.'
'Arm'd?'—'I expect so;—sent on the look-out:
'T is time, belike, to put our helm about.'
'About?—Whate'er may have us now in chase,
We 'll make no running fight, for that were base;
We will die at our quarters, like true men.'
'Ey, ey; for that 't is all the same to Ben.'
'Does Christian know this?'—'Ay; he has piped all hands
To quarters. They are furbishing the stands
Of arms; and we have got some guns to bear,
And scaled them. You are wanted.'—'That 's but fair;
And if it were not, mine is not the soul
To leave my comrades helpless on the shoal.
My Neuha! ah! and must my fate pursue
Not me alone, but one so sweet and true?
But whatsoe'er betide, ah, Neuha! now
Unman me not; the hour will not allow
A tear; I am thine whatever intervenes!'
'Right,' quoth Ben, 'that will do for the marines.'

CANTO THE THIRD

I

THE fight was o'er; the flashing through the gloom,
Which robes the cannon as he wings a tomb,
Had ceased; and sulphury vapours upward driven
Had left the earth, and but polluted heaven.
The rattling roar which rung in every volley
Had left the echoes to their melancholy;
No more they shriek'd their horror, boom for boom;
The strife was done, the vanquish'd had their doom;
The mutineers were crush'd, dispersed, or ta'en,
Or lived to deem the happiest were the slain.
Few, few escaped, and these were hunted o'er
The isle they loved beyond their native shore.
No further home was theirs, it seem'd, on earth,
Once renegades to that which gave them birth;
Track'd like wild beasts, like them they sought the wild,
As to a mother's bosom flies the child;
But vainly wolves and lions seek their den,
And still more vainly men escape from men.

II

Beneath a rock whose jutting base protrudes
Far over ocean in his fiercest moods,
When scaling his enormous crag the wave
Is hurl'd down headlong, like the foremost brave,
And falls back on the foaming crowd behind
Which fight beneath the banners of the wind,
But now at rest, a little remnant drew
Together, bleeding, thirsty, faint, and few;
But still their weapons in their hands, and still
With something of the pride of former will,
As men not all unused to meditate,
And strive much more than wonder at their fate.
Their present lot was what they had foreseen,
And dared as what was likely to have been:
Yet still the lingering hope, which deem'd their lot
Not pardon'd, but unsought for or forgot,

Or trusted that, if sought, their distant caves
Might still be miss'd amidst the world of waves,
Had wean'd their thoughts in part from what they saw
And felt, the vengeance of their country's law.
Their sea-green isle, their guilt-won paradise,
No more could shield their virtue or their vice:
Their better feelings, if such were, were thrown
Back on themselves, — their sins remain'd alone.
Proscribed even in their second country, they
Were lost; in vain the world before them lay;
All outlets seem'd secured. Their new allies
Had fought and bled in mutual sacrifice;
But what avail'd the club and spear, and arm
Of Hercules, against the sulphury charm,
The magic of the thunder, which destroy'd
The warrior ere his strength could be employ'd?
Dug, like a spreading pestilence, the grave
No less of human bravery than the brave!
Their own scant numbers acted all the few
Against the many oft will dare and do.
But though the choice seems native to die free,
Even Greece can boast but one Thermopylæ,
Till *now*, when she has forged her broken chain
Back to a sword, and dies and lives again!

III

Beside the jutting rock the few appear'd,
Like the last remnant of the red-deer's herd;
Their eyes were feverish, and their aspect worn,
But still the hunter's blood was on their horn.
A little stream came tumbling from the height,
And straggling into ocean as it might;
Its bounding crystal frolick'd in the ray,
And gush'd from cliff to crag with saltless spray:
Close on the wild, wide ocean, yet as pure
And fresh as innocence, and more secure,
Its silver torrent glitter'd o'er the deep,
As the shy chamois' eye o'erlooks the steep,
While far below the vast and sullen swell
Of ocean's alpine azure rose and fell.
To this young spring they rush'd, — all feelings first
Absorb'd in passion's and in nature's thirst, —
Drank as they do who drink their last, and threw
Their arms aside to revel in its dew;
Cool'd their scorch'd throats, and wash'd the gory stains
From wounds whose only bandage might be chains:
Then, when their drought was quench'd, look'd sadly round,
As wondering how so many still were found
Alive and fetterless; — but silent all,
Each sought his fellow's eyes, as if to call
On him for language which his lips denied,
As though their voices with their cause had died.

IV

Stern, and aloof a little from the rest,
Stood Christian, with his arms across his chest.
The ruddy, reckless, dauntless hue once spread
Along his cheek was livid now as lead;
His light-brown locks, so graceful in their flow,
Now rose like startled vipers o'er his brow.
Still as a statue, with his lips compress'd
To stifle even the breath within his breast,
Fast by the rock, all menacing, but mute,
He stood; and, save a slight beat of his foot,
Which deepen'd now and then the sandy dint
Beneath his heel, his form seem'd turn'd to flint.
Some paces further Torquil lean'd his head
Against a bank, and spoke not, but he bled, —
Not mortally — his worst wound was within:
His brow was pale, his blue eyes sunken in,

And blood-drops, sprinkled o'er his yellow hair,
Show'd that his faintness came not from despair,
But nature's ebb. Beside him was another,
Rough as a bear, but willing as a brother, —
Ben Bunting, who essay'd to wash, and wipe,
And bind his wound — then calmly lit his pipe,
A trophy which survived a hundred fights,
A beacon which had cheer'd ten thousand nights.
The fourth and last of this deserted group
Walk'd up and down; at times would stand, then stoop
To pick a pebble up — then let it drop —
Then hurry as in haste — then quickly stop —
Then cast his eyes on his companions — then
Half whistle half a tune, and pause again —
And then his former movements would redouble,
With something between carelessness and trouble.
This is a long description, but applies
To scarce five minutes pass'd before the eyes;
But yet *what* minutes! Moments like to these
Rend men's lives into immortalities.

V

At length Jack Skyscrape, a mercurial man,
Who flutter'd over all things like a fan,
More brave than firm, and more disposed to dare
And die at once than wrestle with despair,
Exclaim'd, 'G—d damn!' — those syllables intense,
Nucleus of England's native eloquence,
As the Turk's 'Allah!' or the Roman's more
Pagan 'Proh Jupiter!' was wont of yore
To give their first impressions such a vent,
By way of echo to embarrassment.
Jack was embarrass'd, — never hero more,
And as he knew not what to say, he swore:
Nor swore in vain; the long congenial sound
Revived Ben Bunting from his pipe profound;
He drew it from his mouth, and look'd full wise,
But merely added to the oath his *eyes;*
Thus rendering the imperfect phrase complete,
A peroration I need not repeat.

VI

But Christian, of a higher order, stood
Like an extinct volcano in his mood;
Silent, and sad, and savage, — with the trace
Of passion reeking from his clouded face;
Till lifting up again his sombre eye,
It glanced on Torquil, who lean'd faintly by.
'And is it thus?' he cried, 'unhappy boy!
And thee, too, *thee* — my madness must destroy!'
He said, and strode to where young Torquil stood,
Yet dabbled with his lately flowing blood;
Seized his hand wistfully, but did not press,
And shrunk as fearful of his own caress;
Enquired into his state; and when he heard
The wound was slighter than he deem'd or fear'd,
A moment's brightness pass'd along his brow,
As much as such a moment would allow.
'Yes,' he exclaim'd, 'we are taken in the toil,
But not a coward or a common spoil;
Dearly they have bought us, dearly still may buy; —
And I must fall; but have you strength to fly?
'T would be some comfort still, could you survive;
Our dwindled band is now too few to strive.
Oh, for a sole canoe! though but a shell,
To bear you hence to where a hope may dwell!
For me, my lot is what I sought; to be,
In life or death, the fearless and the free.'

VII

Even as he spoke, around the promontory,
Which nodded o'er the billows high and hoary,
A dark speck dotted ocean: on it flew
Like to the shadow of a roused sea-mew;
Onward it came — and, lo! a second follow'd —
Now seen — now hid — where ocean's vale was hollow'd;

And near, and nearer, till their dusky crew
Presented well-known aspects to the view,
Till on the surf their skimming paddles play,
Buoyant as wings, and flitting through the spray; —
Now perching on the wave's high curl, and now
Dash'd downward in the thundering foam below,
Which flings it broad and boiling sheet on sheet,
And slings its high flakes, shiver'd into sleet:
But floating still through surf and swell, drew nigh
The barks, like small birds through a lowering sky.
Their art seem'd nature — such the skill to sweep
The wave of these born playmates of the deep.

VIII

And who the first that, springing on the strand,
Leap'd like a nereid from her shell to land,
With dark but brilliant skin, and dewy eye
Shining with love, and hope, and constancy?
Neuha — the fond, the faithful, the adored —
Her heart on Torquil's like a torrent pour'd:
And smiled, and wept, and near and nearer clasp'd,
As if to be assured 't was *him* she grasp'd;
Shudder'd to see his yet warm wound, and then,
To find it trivial, smiled and wept again.
She was a warrior's daughter, and could bear
Such sights, and feel, and mourn, but not despair.
Her lover lived, — nor foes nor fears could blight
That full-blown moment in its all delight:
Joy trickled in her tears, joy fill'd the sob
That rock'd her heart till almost HEARD to throb;
And paradise was breathing in the sigh
Of nature's child in nature's ecstasy.

IX

The sterner spirits who beheld that meeting
Were not unmoved: who are, when hearts are greeting?
Even Christian gazed upon the maid and boy
With tearless eye, but yet a gloomy joy,
Mix'd with those bitter thoughts the soul arrays
In hopeless visions of our better days,
When all 's gone — to the rainbow's latest ray.
'And but for me!' he said, and turn'd away;
Then gazed upon the pair, as in his den
A lion looks upon his cubs again;
And then relapsed into his sullen guise,
As heedless of his further destinies.

X

But brief their time for good or evil thought;
The billows round the promontory brought
The plash of hostile oars. — Alas! who made
That sound a dread? All around them seem'd array'd
Against them, save the bride of Toobonai:
She, as she caught the first glimpse o'er the bay
Of the arm'd boats which hurried to complete
The remnant's ruin with their flying feet,
Beckon'd the natives round her to their prows,
Embark'd their guests and launch'd their light canoes;
In one placed Christian and his comrades twain;
But she and Torquil must not part again,
She fix'd him in her own. Away! away!
They clear the breakers, dart along the bay,
And towards a group of islets, such as bear
The sea-bird's nest and seal's surf-hollow'd lair,
They skim the blue tops of the billows; fast
They flew, and fast their fierce pursuers chased.
They gain upon them — now they lose again —
Again make way and menace o'er the main;
And now the two canoes in chase divide,
And follow different courses o'er the tide,
To baffle the pursuit. — Away! away!
As life is on each paddle's flight to-day,
And more than life or lives to Neuha: Love
Freights the frail bark and urges to the cove —

And now the refuge and the foe are nigh —
Yet, yet a moment! — Fly, thou light ark, fly!

CANTO THE FOURTH

I

White as a white sail on a dusky sea,
When half the horizon 's clouded and half free,
Fluttering between the dun wave and the sky,
Is hope's last gleam in man's extremity.
Her anchor parts; but still her snowy sail
Attracts our eye amidst the rudest gale:
Though every wave she climbs divides us more,
The heart still follows from the loneliest shore.

II

Not distant from the isle of Toobonai,
A black rock rears its bosom o'er the spray,
The haunt of birds, a desert to mankind,
Where the rough seal reposes from the wind,
And sleeps unwieldy in his cavern dun,
Or gambols with huge frolic in the sun.
There shrilly to the passing oar is heard
The startled echo of the ocean bird,
Who rears on its bare breast her callow brood,
The feather'd fishers of the solitude.
A narrow segment of the yellow sand
On one side forms the outline of a strand;
Here the young turtle, crawling from his shell,
Steals to the deep wherein his parents dwell;
Chipp'd by the beam, a nursling of the day,
But hatch'd for ocean by the fostering ray.
The rest was one bleak precipice, as e'er
Gave mariners a shelter and despair;
A spot to make the saved regret the deck
Which late went down, and envy the lost wreck.
Such was the stern asylum Neuha chose
To shield her lover from his following foes;
But all its secret was not told; she knew
In this a treasure hidden from the view.

III

Ere the canoes divided, near the spot,
The men that mann'd what held her Torquil's lot,
By her command removed, to strengthen more
The skiff which wafted Christian from the shore.
This he would have opposed; but with a smile
She pointed calmly to the craggy isle,
And bade him 'speed and prosper.' *She* would take
The rest upon herself for Torquil's sake.
They parted with this added aid; afar
The proa darted like a shooting star,
And gain'd on the pursuers, who now steer'd
Right on the rock which she and Torquil near'd.
They pull'd; her arm, though delicate, was free
And firm as ever grappled with the sea,
And yielded scarce to Torquil's manlier strength.
The prow now almost lay within its length
Of the crag's steep, inexorable face,
With nought but soundless waters for its base;
Within a hundred boats' length was the foe,
And now what refuge but their frail canoe?
This Torquil ask'd with half-upbraiding eye,
Which said — 'Has Neuha brought me here to die?
Is this a place of safety, or a grave,
And yon huge rock the tombstone of the wave?'

IV

They rested on their paddles, and uprose
Neuha, and pointing to the approaching foes,
Cried, 'Torquil, follow me, and fearless follow!'
Then plunged at once into the ocean's hollow.
There was no time to pause — the foes were near,
Chains in his eye, and menace in his ear;
With vigour they pull'd on, and as they came,
Hail'd him to yield, and by his forfeit name.
Headlong he leapt — to him the swimmer's skill
Was native, and now all his hope from ill.

But how, or where? He dived, and rose no more;
The boat's crew look'd amazed o'er sea and shore.
There was no landing on that precipice,
Steep, harsh, and slippery as a berg of ice.
They watch'd awhile to see him float again,
But not a trace rebubbled from the main.
The wave roll'd on, no ripple on its face
Since their first plunge recall'd a single trace;
The little whirl which eddied, and slight foam,
That whiten'd o'er what seem'd their latest home,
White as a sepulchre above the pair
Who left no marble (mournful as an heir)
The quiet proa wavering o'er the tide
Was all that told of Torquil and his bride;
And but for this alone the whole might seem
The vanish'd phantom of a seaman's dream.
They paused and search'd in vain, then pull'd away;
Even superstition now forbade their stay.
Some said he had not plunged into the wave,
But vanish'd like a corpse-light from a grave;
Others, that something supernatural
Glared in his figure, more than mortal tall;
While all agreed that in his cheek and eye
There was a dead hue of eternity.
Still as their oars receded from the crag,
Round every weed a moment would they lag,
Expectant of some token of their prey;
But no — he had melted from them like the spray.

V

And where was he, the pilgrim of the deep,
Following the nereid? Had they ceased to weep
For ever? or, received in coral caves,
Wrung life and pity from the softening waves?
Did they with ocean's hidden sovereigns dwell,
And sound with mermen the fantastic shell?
Did Neuha with the mermaids comb her hair
Flowing o'er ocean as it stream'd in air?
Or had they perish'd, and in silence slept
Beneath the gulf wherein they boldly leapt?

VI

Young Neuha plunged into the deep, and he
Follow'd: her track beneath her native sea
Was as a native's of the element,
So smoothly, bravely, brilliantly she went,
Leaving a streak of light behind her heel,
Which struck and flash'd like an amphibious steel.
Closely, and scarcely less expert to trace
The depths where divers hold the pearl in chase,
Torquil, the nursling of the northern seas,
Pursued her liquid steps with heart and ease.
Deep — deeper for an instant Neuha led
The way, then upward soar'd; and as she spread
Her arms, and flung the foam from off her locks,
Laugh'd, and the sound was answer'd by the rocks.
They had gain'd a central realm of earth again,
But look'd for tree, and field, and sky, in vain.
Around she pointed to a spacious cave,
Whose only portal was the keyless wave
(A hollow archway by the sun unseen,
Save through the billows' glassy veil of green,
In some transparent ocean holiday,
When all the finny people are at play),
Wiped with her hair the brine from Torquil's eyes,
And clapp'd her hands with joy at his surprise;
Led him to where the rock appear'd to jut,
And form a something like a Triton's hut;
For all was darkness for a space, till day
Through clefts above let in a sober'd ray.
As in some old cathedral's glimmering aisle
The dusty monuments from light recoil,
Thus sadly in their refuge submarine
The vault drew half her shadow from the scene.

VII

Forth from her bosom the young savage drew
A pine torch, strongly girded with gnatoo;
A plantain-leaf o'er all, the more to keep
Its latent sparkle from the sapping deep.

This mantle kept it dry; then from a nook
Of the same plantain-leaf a flint she took,
A few shrunk wither'd twigs, and from the blade
Of Torquil's knife struck fire; and thus array'd
The grot with torchlight. Wide it was and high,
And show'd a self-born Gothic canopy;
The arch uprear'd by nature's architect,
The architrave some earthquake might erect;
The buttress from some mountain's bosom hurl'd,
When the Poles crash'd, and water was the world;
Or harden'd from some earth-absorbing fire,
While yet the globe reek'd from its funeral pyre;
The fretted pinnacle, the aisle, the nave,
Were there, all scoop'd by Darkness from her cave.
There, with a little tinge of phantasy,
Fantastic faces moped and mow'd on high,
And then a mitre or a shrine would fix
The eye upon its seeming crucifix.
Thus Nature play'd with the stalactites,
And built herself a chapel of the seas.

VIII

And Neuha took her Torquil by the hand,
And waved along the vault her kindled brand,
And led him into each recess, and show'd
The secret places of their new abode.
Nor these alone, for all had been prepared
Before, to soothe the lover's lot she shared:
The mat for rest; for dress the fresh gnatoo,
And sandal oil to fence against the dew;
For food the cocoa-nut, the yam, the bread
Born of the fruit; for board the plantain spread
With its broad leaf, or turtle-shell which bore
A banquet in the flesh it cover'd o'er;
The gourd with water recent from the rill,
The ripe banana from the mellow hill;
A pine-torch pile to keep undying light,
And she herself, as beautiful as night,
To fling her shadowy spirit o'er the scene,
And make their subterranean world serene.
She had foreseen, since first the stranger's sail
Drew to their isle, that force or flight might fail,
And form'd a refuge of the rocky den
For Torquil's safety from his countrymen.
Each dawn had wafted there her light canoe,
Laden with all the golden fruits that grew;
Each eve had seen her gliding through the hour
With all could cheer or deck their sparry bower;
And now she spread her little store with smiles,
The happiest daughter of the loving isles.

IX

She, as he gazed with grateful wonder, press'd
Her shelter'd love to her impassion'd breast;
And suited to her soft caresses, told
An olden tale of love, — for love is old,
Old as eternity, but not outworn,
With each new being born or to be born:
How a young chief, a thousand moons ago,
Diving for turtle in the depths below,
Had risen, in tracking fast his ocean prey,
Into the cave which round and o'er them lay;
How in some desperate feud of after-time
He shelter'd there a daughter of the clime,
A foe beloved, and offspring of a foe,
Saved by his tribe but for a captive's woe;
How, when the storm of war was still'd, he led
His island clan to where the waters spread
Their deep-green shadow o'er the rocky door,
Then dived — it seem'd as if to rise no more: —
His wondering mates, amazed within their bark,
Or deem'd him mad, or prey to the blue shark;
Row'd round in sorrow the sea-girded rock,
Then paused upon their paddles from the shock:
When, fresh and springing from the deep, they saw
A goddess rise — so deem'd they in their awe;
And their companion, glorious by her side,
Proud and exulting in his mermaid bride: —
And how, when undeceived, the pair they bore
With sounding conchs and joyous shouts to shore;

How they had gladly lived and calmly died, —
And why not also Torquil and his bride?
Not mine to tell the rapturous caress
Which follow'd wildly in that wild recess
This tale; enough that all within that cave
Was love, though buried strong as in the grave
Where Abelard, through twenty years of death,
When Eloïsa's form was lower'd beneath
Their nuptial vault, his arms outstretch'd, and press'd
The kindling ashes to his kindled breast.
The waves without sang round their couch, their roar
As much unheeded as if life were o'er;
Within, their hearts made all their harmony,
Love's broken murmur and more broken sigh.

X

And they, the cause and sharers of the shock
Which left them exiles of the hollow rock,
Where were they? O'er the sea for life they plied,
To seek from Heaven the shelter men denied.
Another course had been their choice — but where?
The wave which bore them still their foes would bear,
Who, disappointed of their former chase,
In search of Christian now renew'd their race.
Eager with anger, their strong arms made way,
Like vultures baffled of their previous prey.
They gain'd upon them, all whose safety lay
In some bleak crag or deeply-hidden bay.
No further chance or choice remain'd; and right
For the first further rock which met their sight
They steer'd, to take their latest view of land,
And yield as victims, or die sword in hand;
Dismiss'd the natives and their shallop, who
Would still have battled for that scanty crew;
But Christian bade them seek their shore again,
Nor add a sacrifice which were in vain;
For what were simple bow and savage spear
Against the arms which must be wielded here?

XI

They landed on a wild but narrow scene,
Where few but Nature's footsteps yet had been;
Prepared their arms, and with that gloomy eye,
Stern and sustain'd, of man's extremity,
When hope is gone, nor glory's self remains
To cheer resistance against death or chains, —
They stood, the three, as the three hundred stood
Who dyed Thermopylæ with holy blood.
But, ah, how different! 't is the *cause* makes all,
Degrades or hallows courage in its fall.
O'er them no fame, eternal and intense,
Blazed through the clouds of death and beckon'd hence;
No grateful country, smiling through her tears,
Begun the praises of a thousand years;
No nation's eyes would on their tomb be bent,
No heroes envy them their monument;
However boldly their warm blood was spilt,
Their life was shame, their epitaph was guilt.
And this they knew and felt, at least the one,
The leader of the band he had undone;
Who, born perchance for better things, had set
His life upon a cast which linger'd yet:
But now the die was to be thrown, and all
The chances were in favour of his fall:
And such a fall! But still he faced the shock,
Obdurate as a portion of the rock
Whereon he stood, and fix'd his levell'd gun,
Dark as a sullen cloud before the sun.

XII

The boat drew nigh, well arm'd, and firm the crew
To act whatever duty bade them do;

Careless of danger, as the onward wind
Is of the leaves it strews, nor looks behind.
And yet perhaps they rather wish'd to go
Against a nation's than a native foe,
And felt that this poor victim of self-will,
Briton no more, had once been Britain's still.
They hail'd him to surrender — no reply;
Their arms were poised, and glitter'd in the sky.
They hail'd again — no answer; yet once more
They offer'd quarter louder than before.
The echoes only, from the rocks rebound,
Took their last farewell of the dying sound.
Then flash'd the flint, and blazed the volleying flame,
And the smoke rose between them and their aim,
While the rock rattled with the bullets' knell,
Which peal'd in vain and flatten'd as they fell;
Then flew the only answer to be given
By those who had lost all hope in earth or heaven.
After the first fierce peal, as they pull'd nigher,
They heard the voice of Christian shout, 'Now fire!'
And ere the word upon the echo died,
Two fell; the rest assail'd the rock's rough side,
And, furious at the madness of their foes,
Disdain'd all further efforts, save to close.
But steep the crag, and all without a path,
Each step opposed a bastion to their wrath;
While, placed 'midst clefts the least accessible,
Which Christian's eye was train'd to mark full well,
The three maintain'd a strife which must not yield,
In spots where eagles might have chosen to build.
Their every shot told; while the assailant fell,
Dash'd on the shingles like the limpet shell;
But still enough survived, and mounted still,
Scattering their numbers here and there, until
Surrounded and commanded, though not nigh
Enough for seizure, near enough to die,
The desperate trio held aloof their fate
But by a thread, like sharks who have gorged the bait;
Yet to the very last they battled well,
And not a groan inform'd their foes *who* fell.
Christian died last — twice wounded; and once more
Mercy was offer'd when they saw his gore;
Too late for life, but not too late to die,
With, though a hostile hand, to close his eye.
A limb was broken, and he droop'd along
The crag, as doth a falcon reft of young.
The sound revived him, or appear'd to wake
Some passion which a weakly gesture spake:
He beckon'd to the foremost, who drew nigh,
But, as they near'd, he rear'd his weapon high —
His last ball had been aim'd, but from his breast
He tore the topmost button from his vest,
Down the tube dash'd it, levell'd, fired, and smiled
As his foe fell; then, like a serpent, coil'd
His wounded, weary form, to where the steep
Look'd desperate as himself along the deep;
Cast one glance back, and clench'd his hand, and shook
His last rage 'gainst the earth which he forsook;
Then plunged: the rock below received like glass
His body crush'd into one gory mass,
With scarce a shred to tell of human form,
Or fragment for the sea-bird or the worm;
A fair-hair'd scalp, besmear'd with blood and weeds,
Yet reek'd, the remnant of himself and deeds;
Some splinters of his weapons (to the last,
As long as hand could hold, he held them fast)
Yet glitter'd, but at distance — hurl'd away
To rust beneath the dew and dashing spray.
The rest was nothing — save a life misspent,
And soul — but who shall answer where it went?

'T is ours to bear, not judge the dead; and they
Who doom to hell, themselves are on the way,
Unless these bullies of eternal pains
Are pardon'd their bad hearts for their worse brains.

XIII

The deed was over! All were gone or ta'en,
The fugitive, the captive, or the slain.
Chain'd on the deck, where once, a gallant crew,
They stood with honour, were the wretched few
Survivors of the skirmish on the isle;
But the last rock left no surviving spoil.
Cold lay they where they fell, and weltering,
While o'er them flapp'd the sea-bird's dewy wing,
Now wheeling nearer from the neighbouring surge,
And screaming high their harsh and hungry dirge.
But calm and careless heaved the wave below,
Eternal with unsympathetic flow;
Far o'er its face the dolphins sported on,
And sprung the flying fish against the sun,
Till its dried wing relapsed from its brief height,
To gather moisture for another flight.

XIV

'T was morn; and Neuha, who by dawn of day
Swam smoothly forth to catch the rising ray,
And watch if aught approach'd the amphibious lair
Where lay her lover, saw a sail in air:
It flapp'd, it fill'd, and to the growing gale
Bent its broad arch: her breath began to fail
With fluttering fear, her heart beat thick and high,
While yet a doubt sprung where its course might lie.
But no! it came not; fast and far away
The shadow lessen'd as it clear'd the bay.
She gazed, and flung the sea-foam from her eyes,
To watch as for a rainbow in the skies.
On the horizon verged the distant deck,
Diminish'd, dwindled to a very speck —
Then vanish'd. All was ocean, all was joy!
Down plunged she through the cave to rouse her boy;
Told all she had seen, and all she hoped, and all
That happy love could augur or recall;
Sprung forth again, with Torquil following free
His bounding nereid over the broad sea;
Swam round the rock, to where a shallow cleft
Hid the canoe that Neuha there had left
Drifting along the tide, without an oar,
That eve the strangers chased them from the shore;
But when these vanish'd, she pursued her prow,
Regain'd, and urged to where they found it now.
Nor ever did more love and joy embark,
Than now were wafted in that slender ark.

XV

Again their own shore rises on the view,
No more polluted with a hostile hue;
No sullen ship lay bristling o'er the foam,
A floating dungeon: — all was hope and home!
A thousand proas darted o'er the bay,
With sounding shells, and heralded their way;
The chiefs came down, around the people pour'd,
And welcomed Torquil as a son restored;
The women throng'd, embracing and embraced
By Neuha, asking where they had been chased,
And how escaped! The tale was told; and then
One acclamation rent the sky again;
And from that hour a new tradition gave
Their sanctuary the name of 'Neuha's Cave.'
A hundred fires, far flickering from the height,
Blazed o'er the general revel of the night,
The feast in honour of the guest, return'd
To peace and pleasure, perilously earn'd;
A night succeeded by such happy days
As only the yet infant world displays.

ITALIAN POEMS

[Taken as a whole the Italian Poems must be reckoned the least valuable portion of Byron's work, although one of them is interesting as showing the tendency of the poet's mind, and another is an extraordinary *tour de force*. Their composition extends from April of 1817 to March of 1820, the first three years of his residence in Italy, and is the fruit of his genuine love for the language and literature of that land. In the autumn of 1816 Byron left Switzerland for Italy and was soon domiciled in Venice. The first of the Italian poems, however, was the result of a visit to Ferrara, and shows how strong was the historical spirit in him. *The Lament of Tasso* is dated April 20, 1817. The subject seems to have had a special interest for Byron, and he has introduced it with good effect into the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* (stanzas xxxv. *et seq.*), not without a fling at Boileau in return for the famous *clinquant du Tasse*. *Beppo* was written in the autumn of 1817, in acknowledged imitation of the mock-heroic style of John Hookham Frere. At this time Byron was still engaged on the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* and it is a mark of his versatility that he could work at once on two poems so different in character. While finishing the solemn apostrophes of his romantic Pilgrim he was thus preluding the satirical mockery of the later Pilgrim, *Don Juan*. The first canto of the latter poem was, indeed, finished in September of the following year. The *Ode on Venice*, quite in the style and metre of the *Tasso*, was written in July of 1818, although not published for nearly a twelvemonth, when it appeared with *Mazeppa* and *A Fragment*. *The Prophecy of Dante*, both in subject and metre, was peculiarly out of Byron's range, and must be reckoned one of his absolute failures. As for the metre, the *terza rima*, Byron was only one of a number of English poets who have shown astonishing perversity in disregarding the principles on which its success depends, as might have been learned from the slightest attention to the manner of Dante himself and the other great Italians. Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* displays the same wilful ignorance and is saved from failure only by its brevity. *The Prophecy of Dante* was written at Ravenna in June, 1819, at the request of the Countess Guiccioli. Byron's next Italian poem proves that, if he imitated Frere in *Beppo*, he also went directly to the sources from which Frere himself had drawn. His translation of the first canto of Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore* is a careful piece of work, finished in the early weeks of 1820 at Ravenna, and in its closeness to the original is really a *tour de force*. It is not necessary to point out the influence of such a translation on *Don Juan*. The last of his Italian poems was a translation of the famous *Francesca of Rimini* episode in the fifth canto of Dante's *Inferno*. Writing to Murray from Ravenna, March 20, 1820, Byron says: 'Last post I sent you *The Vision of Dante*, — four first cantos. Enclosed you will find, *line for line*, in *third rhyme* (*terza rima*), of which your British Blackguard reader as yet understands nothing, Fanny of Rimini. You know that she was born here, and married, and slain, from Cary, Boyd, and such people already. I have done it into *cramp* English, line for line, and rhyme for rhyme, to try the possibility.']

THE LAMENT OF TASSO

At Ferrara, in the Library, are preserved the original MSS. of Tasso's *Gierusalemme* and of Guarini's *Pastor Fido*, with letters of Tasso, one from Titian to Ariosto; and the inkstand and chair, the tomb and the house of the latter. But, as misfortune has a greater interest for posterity, and little or none for the cotemporary, the cell where Tasso was confined in the hospital of St. Anna attracts a more fixed attention than the residence or the monument of Ariosto — at least it had this effect on me. There are two inscriptions, one on the outer gate, the second over the cell itself, inviting, unnecessarily, the wonder and the indignation of the spectator. Ferrara is much decayed, and depopulated: the castle still exists entire; and I saw the court where Parisina and Hugo were beheaded, according to the annal of Gibbon.

I

Long years! — It tries the thrilling frame to bear,
And eagle-spirit of a Child of Song,
Long years of outrage, calumny, and wrong;
Imputed madness, prison'd solitude,
And the mind's canker in its savage mood,
When the impatient thirst of light and air
Parches the heart; and the abhorrèd grate,
Marring the sunbeams with its hideous shade,
Works through the throbbing eyeball to the brain
With a hot sense of heaviness and pain.
And bare, at once, Captivity display'd
Stands scoffing through the never-open'd gate,

Which nothing through its bars admits, save day,
And tasteless food, which I have eat alone
Till its unsocial bitterness is gone;
And I can banquet like a beast of prey,
Sullen and lonely, couching in the cave
Which is my lair, and — it may be — my grave.
All this hath somewhat worn me, and may wear,
But must be borne. I stoop not to despair;
For I have battled with mine agony,
And made me wings wherewith to overfly
The narrow circus of my dungeon wall,
And freed the Holy Sepulchre from thrall;
And revell’d among men and things divine,
And pour’d my spirit over Palestine,
In honour of the sacred war for Him,
The God who was on earth and is in heaven,
For he hath strengthen’d me in heart and limb.
That through this sufferance I might be forgiven,
I have employ’d my penance to record
How Salem’s shrine was won, and how adored.

II

But this is o’er, my pleasant task is done: —
My long-sustaining friend of many years !
If I do blot thy final page with tears,
Know, that my sorrows have wrung from me none.
But thou, my young creation ! my soul’s child !
Which ever playing round me came and smiled,
And woo’d me from myself with thy sweet sight,
Thou too art gone — and so is my delight:
And therefore do I weep and inly bleed
With this last bruise upon a broken reed.
Thou too art ended — what is left me now ?
For I have anguish yet to bear — and how ?
I know not that — but in the innate force
Of my own spirit shall be found resource.
I have not sunk, for I had no remorse,
Nor cause for such: they call’d me mad — and why ?
Oh Leonora ! wilt not *thou* reply ?
I was indeed delirious in my heart
To lift my love so lofty as thou art;
But still my frenzy was not of the mind;
I knew my fault, and feel my punishment
Not less because I suffer it unbent.
That thou wert beautiful, and I not blind,
Hath been the sin which shuts me from mankind;
But let them go, or torture as they will,
My heart can multiply thine image still;
Successful love may sate itself away,
The wretched are the faithful, ’t is their fate
To have all feeling save the one decay,
And every passion into one dilate,
As rapid rivers into ocean pour;
But ours is fathomless, and hath no shore.

III

Above me, hark ! the long and maniac cry
Of minds and bodies in captivity.
And hark ! the lash and the increasing howl,
And the half-inarticulate blasphemy !
There be some here with worse than frenzy foul,
Some who do still goad on the o’er-labour’d mind,
And dim the little light that ’s left behind
With needless torture, as their tyrant will
Is wound up to the lust of doing ill.
With these and with their victims am I class’d,
’Mid sounds and sights like these long years have pass’d;
’Mid sights and sounds like these my life may close:
So let it be, for then I shall repose.

IV

I have been patient, let me be so yet;
I had forgotten half I would forget,
But it revives — Oh ! would it were my lot
To be forgetful as I am forgot !
Feel I not wroth with those who bade me dwell
In this vast lazar-house of many woes ?
Where laughter is not mirth, nor thought the mind,
Nor words a language, nor e’en men mankind;
Where cries reply to curses, shrieks to blows,
And each is tortured in his separate hell —
For we are crowded in our solitudes —

Many, but each divided by the wall
Which echoes Madness in her babbling moods;
While all can hear, none heed his neighbour's call —
None! save that One, the veriest wretch of all,
Who was not made to be the mate of these,
Nor bound between Distraction and Disease.
Feel I not wroth with those who placed me here?
Who have debased me in the minds of men,
Debarring me the usage of my own,
Blighting my life in best of its career,
Branding my thoughts as things to shun and fear?
Would I not pay them back these pangs again,
And teach them inward Sorrow's stifled groan?
The struggle to be calm, and cold distress
Which undermines our Stoical success?
No! still too proud to be vindictive, I
Have pardon'd princes' insults and would die.
Yes, Sister of my Sovereign! for thy sake
I weed all bitterness from out my breast,
It hath no business where *thou* art a guest;
Thy brother hates — but I can not detest;
Thou pitiest not — but I can not forsake.

V

Look on a love which knows not to despair,
But all unquench'd is still my better part,
Dwelling deep in my shut and silent heart
As dwells the gather'd lightning in its cloud,
Encompass'd with its dark and rolling shroud,
Till struck, — forth flies the all-ethereal dart!
And thus at the collision of thy name
The vivid thought still flashes through my frame,
And for a moment all things as they were
Flit by me; — they are gone — I am the same.
And yet my love without ambition grew;
I knew thy state, my station, and I knew
A princess was no love-mate for a bard;
I told it not, I breathed it not, it was
Sufficient to itself, its own reward;
And if my eyes reveal'd it, they, alas!
Were punish'd by the silentness of thine,
And yet I did not venture to repine.
Thou wert to me a crystal-girded shrine,
Worshipp'd at holy distance, and around
Hallow'd and meekly kiss'd the saintly ground;
Not for thou wert a princess, but that Love
Hath robed thee with a glory, and array'd
Thy lineaments in beauty that dismay'd —
Oh! not dismay'd — but awed, like One above;
And in that sweet severity there was
A something which all softness did surpass —
I know not how — thy genius master'd mine —
My star stood still before thee: — if it were
Presumptuous thus to love without design,
That sad fatality hath cost me dear;
But thou art dearest still, and I should be
Fit for this cell which wrongs me — but for *thee*.
The very love which lock'd me to my chain
Hath lighten'd half its weight; and for the rest,
Though heavy, lent me vigour to sustain,
And look to thee with undivided breast,
And foil the ingenuity of Pain.

VI

It is no marvel; from my very birth
My soul was drunk with love, which did pervade
And mingle with whate'er I saw on earth.
Of objects all inanimate I made
Idols, and out of wild and lonely flowers,
And rocks whereby they grew, a paradise,
Where I did lay me down within the shade
Of waving trees, and dream'd uncounted hours,
Though I was chid for wandering; and the Wise
Shook their white aged heads o'er me, and said
Of such materials wretched men were made,
And such a truant boy would end in woe,
And that the only lesson was a blow; —
And then they smote me, and I did not weep,
But cursed them in my heart, and to my haunt
Return'd and wept alone, and dream'd again
The visions which arise without a sleep.

And with my years my soul began to pant
With feelings of strange tumult and soft pain;
And the whole heart exhaled into One Want,
But undefined and wandering, till the day
I found the thing I sought — and that was thee.
And then I lost my being all to be
Absorb'd in thine; the world was past away,
Thou didst annihilate the earth to me!

VII

I loved all Solitude; but little thought
To spend I know not what of life, remote
From all communion with existence, save
The maniac and his tyrant. Had I been
Their fellow, many years ere this had seen
My mind like theirs corrupted to its grave, —
But who hath seen me writhe or heard me rave?
Perchance in such a cell we suffer more
Than the wreck'd sailor on his desert shore;
The world is all before him — *mine* is *here*,
Scarce twice the space they must accord my bier.
What though *he* perish, he may lift his eye
And with a dying glance upbraid the sky —
I will not raise my own in such reproof,
Although 't is clouded by my dungeon roof.

VIII

Yet do I feel at times my mind decline,
But with a sense of its decay: — I see
Unwonted lights along my prison shine,
And a strange demon, who is vexing me
With pilfering pranks and petty pains, below
The feeling of the healthful and the free;
But much to One, who long hath suffer'd so,
Sickness of heart, and narrowness of place,
And all that may be borne, or can debase.
I thought mine enemies had been but Man,
But Spirits may be leagued with them — all Earth
Abandons, Heaven forgets me; in the dearth
Of such defence the Powers of Evil can,
It may be, tempt me further, and prevail
Against the outworn creature they assail.
Why in this furnace is my spirit proved
Like steel in tempering fire? because I loved?
Because I loved what not to love, and see,
Was more or less than mortal and than me.

IX

I once was quick in feeling — that is o'er;
My scars are callous, or I should have dash'd
My brain against these bars, as the sun flash'd
In mockery through them. If I bear and bore
The much I have recounted, and the more
Which hath no words, 't is that I would not die
And sanction with self-slaughter the dull lie
Which snared me here, and with the brand of shame
Stamp Madness deep into my memory,
And woo Compassion to a blighted name,
Sealing the sentence which my foes proclaim.
No — it shall be immortal! and I make
A future temple of my present cell,
Which nations yet shall visit for my sake.
While thou, Ferrara! when no longer dwell
The ducal chiefs within thee, shalt fall down,
And crumbling piecemeal view thy hearthless halls, —
A poet's wreath shall be thine only crown,
A poet's dungeon thy most far renown,
While strangers wonder o'er thy unpeopled walls!
And thou, Leonora! thou — who wert ashamed
That such as I could love, who blush'd to hear
To less than monarchs that thou couldst be dear —
Go! tell thy brother, that my heart, untamed
By grief, years, weariness — and it may be
A taint of that he would impute to me —
From long infection of a den like this,
Where the mind rots congenial with the abyss,
Adores thee still; — and add, that when the towers
And battlements which guard his joyous hours

Of banquet, dance, and revel, are forgot,
Or left untended in a dull repose,
This — this shall be a consecrated spot!
But Thou — when all that Birth and Beauty throws
Of magic round thee is extinct — shalt have
One half the laurel which o'ershades my grave.
No power in death can tear our names apart,
As none in life could rend thee from my heart.
Yes, Leonora! it shall be our fate
To be entwined for ever — but too late!

BEPPO

A VENETIAN STORY

'*Rosalind.* Farewell, Monsieur Traveller: Look, you lisp, and wear strange suits: disable all the benefits of your own country; be out of love with your Nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are; or I will scarce think you have swam in a *Gondola*.'
As You Like It, Act IV. Scene 1.

Annotation of the Commentators.

'That is, been at *Venice*, which was much visited by the young English gentlemen of those times, and was then what *Paris* is *now*, — the seat of all dissoluteness.'
S. A. [Samuel Ayscough.]

I

'Tis known, at least it should be, that throughout
  All countries of the Catholic persuasion,
Some weeks before Shrove Tuesday comes about,
  The people take their fill of recreation,
And buy repentance, ere they grow devout,
  However high their rank or low their station,
With fiddling, feasting, dancing, drinking, masquing,
And other things which may be had for asking.

II

The moment night with dusky mantle covers
  The skies (and the more duskily the better),
The time less liked by husbands than by lovers
  Begins, and prudery flings aside her fetter;
And gaiety on restless tiptoe hovers,
  Giggling with all the gallants who beset her;
And there are songs and quavers, roaring, humming,
Guitars, and every other sort of strumming.

III

And there are dresses splendid, but fantastical,
  Masks of all times and nations, Turks and Jews,
And harlequins and clowns, with feats gymnastical,
  Greeks, Romans, Yankee-doodles, and Hindoos;
All kinds of dress, except the ecclesiastical,
  All people, as their fancies hit, may choose,
But no one in these parts may quiz the clergy, —
Therefore take heed, ye Freethinkers! I charge ye.

IV

You 'd better walk about begirt with briars,
  Instead of coat and smallclothes, than put on
A single stitch reflecting upon friars,
  Although you swore it only was in fun;
They 'd haul you o'er the coals, and stir the fires
  Of Phlegethon with every mother's son,
Nor say one mass to cool the caldron's bubble
That boil'd your bones, unless you paid them double.

V

But saving this, you may put on whate'er
  You like by way of doublet, cape, or cloak,
Such as in Monmouth-street, or in Rag Fair,
  Would rig you out in seriousness or joke;
And even in Italy such places are,
  With prettier name in softer accents spoke,
For, bating Covent Garden, I can hit on
No place that 's call'd 'Piazza' in Great Britain.

VI

This feast is named the Carnival, which being
Interpreted, implies 'farewell to flesh:'
So call'd, because, the name and thing agreeing,
Through Lent they live on fish both salt and fresh.
But why they usher Lent with so much glee in,
Is more than I can tell, although I guess
'T is as we take a glass with friends at parting,
In the stage-coach or packet, just at starting.

VII

And thus they bid farewell to carnal dishes,
And solid meats, and highly spiced ragouts,
To live for forty days on ill-dress'd fishes,
Because they have no sauces to their stews,
A thing which causes many 'poohs' and 'pishes,'
And several oaths (which would not suit the Muse),
From travellers accustom'd from a boy
To eat their salmon, at the least, with soy.

VIII

And therefore humbly I would recommend
'The curious in fish-sauce,' before they cross
The sea, to bid their cook, or wife, or friend,
Walk or ride to the Strand, and buy in gross
(Or if set out beforehand, these may send
By any means least liable to loss),
Ketchup, Soy, Chili-vinegar, and Harvey,
Or, by the Lord! a Lent will well-nigh starve ye;

IX

That is to say, if your religion 's Roman,
And you at Rome would do as Romans do,
According to the proverb, — although no man,
If foreign, is obliged to fast; and you,
If Protestant, or sickly, or a woman;
Would rather dine in sin on a ragout —
Dine and be d—d! I don't mean to be coarse,
But that 's the penalty, to say no worse.

X

Of all the places where the Carnival
Was most facetious in the days of yore,
For dance, and song, and serenade, and ball,
And masque, and mime, and mystery, and more
Than I have time to tell now, or at all,
Venice the bell from every city bore, —
And at the moment when I fix my story,
That sea-born city was in all her glory.

XI

They 've pretty faces yet, those same Venetians,
Black eyes, arch'd brows, and sweet expressions still;
Such as of old were copied from the Grecians,
In ancient arts by moderns mimick'd ill;
And like so many Venuses of Titian's
(The best 's at Florence — see it, if ye will),
They look when leaning over the balcony,
Or stepp'd from out a picture by Giorgione,

XII

Whose tints are truth and beauty at their best;
And when you to Manfrini's palace go,
That picture (howsoever fine the rest)
Is loveliest to my mind of all the show;
It may perhaps be also to *your* zest,
And that 's the cause I rhyme upon it so:
'T is but a portrait of his son, and wife,
And self; but *such* a woman! love in life!

XIII

Love in full life and length, not love ideal,
No, nor ideal beauty, that fine name,
But something better still, so very real,
That the sweet model must have been the same;
A thing that you would purchase, beg, or steal,
Wer't not impossible, besides a shame.
The face recalls some face, as 't were with pain,
You once have seen, but ne'er will see again;

XIV

One of those forms which flit by us, when we
Are young and fix our eyes on every face;
And, oh! the loveliness at times we see
In momentary gliding, the soft grace,

The youth, the bloom, the beauty which agree,
In many a nameless being we retrace,
Whose course and home we knew not, nor shall know,
Like the lost Pleiad seen no more below.

XV

I said that like a picture by Giorgione
Venetian women were, and so they *are*,
Particularly seen from a balcony
(For beauty 's sometimes best set off afar),
And there, just like a heroine of Goldoni,
They peep from out the blind, or o'er the bar;
And, truth to say, they 're mostly very pretty,
And rather like to show it, more 's the pity!

XVI

For glances beget ogles, ogles sighs,
Sighs wishes, wishes words, and words a letter,
Which flies on wings of light-heel'd Mercuries
Who do such things because they know no better;
And then, God knows what mischief may arise
When love links two young people in one fetter,
Vile assignations, and adulterous beds,
Elopements, broken vows and hearts and heads.

XVII

Shakspeare described the sex in Desdemona
As very fair, but yet suspect in fame,
And to this day from Venice to Verona
Such matters may be probably the same,
Except that since those times was never known a
Husband whom mere suspicion could inflame
To suffocate a wife no more than twenty,
Because she had a 'cavalier servente.'

XVIII

Their jealousy (if they are ever jealous)
Is of a fair complexion altogether,
Not like that sooty devil of Othello's
Which smothers women in a bed of feather,
But worthier of these much more jolly fellows;
When weary of the matrimonial tether
His head for such a wife no mortal bothers,
But takes at once another, or another's.

XIX

Didst ever see a Gondola? For fear
You should not, I 'll describe it you exactly:
'T is a long cover'd boat that 's common here,
Carved at the prow, built lightly, but compactly;
Row'd by two rowers, each call'd 'Gondolier,'
It glides along the water looking blackly,
Just like a coffin clapt in a canoe,
Where none can make out what you say or do.

XX

And up and down the long canals they go,
And under the Rialto shoot along,
By night and day, all paces, swift or slow;
And round the theatres, a sable throng,
They wait in their dusk livery of woe, —
But not to them do woful things belong,
For sometimes they contain a deal of fun,
Like mourning coaches when the funeral 's done.

XXI

But to my story. — 'T was some years ago,
It may be thirty, forty, more or less,
The carnival was at its height, and so
Were all kinds of buffoonery and dress;
A certain lady went to see the show,
Her real name I know not, nor can guess,
And so we 'll call her Laura, if you please,
Because it slips into my verse with ease.

XXII

She was not old, nor young, nor at the years
Which certain people call a '*certain age*,'
Which yet the most uncertain age appears,
Because I never heard, nor could engage
A person yet by prayers, or bribes, or tears,
To name, define by speech, or write on page,
The period meant precisely by that word, —
Which surely is exceedingly absurd.

XXIII

Laura was blooming still, had made the best
Of time, and time return'd the compliment
And treated her genteelly, so that, dress'd,
She look'd extremely well where'er she went;
A pretty woman is a welcome guest,
And Laura's brow a frown had rarely bent;
Indeed she shone all smiles, and seem'd to flatter
Mankind with her black eyes for looking at her.

XXIV

She was a married woman; 't is convenient,
Because in Christian countries 't is a rule
To view their little slips with eyes more lenient;
Whereas if single ladies play the fool
(Unless within the period intervenient
A well-timed wedding makes the scandal cool),
I don't know how they ever can get over it,
Except they manage never to discover it.

XXV

Her husband sail'd upon the Adriatic,
And made some voyages, too, in other seas,
And when he lay in quarantine for pratique
(A forty days' precaution 'gainst disease),
His wife would mount, at times, her highest attic,
For thence she could discern the ship with ease:
He was a merchant trading to Aleppo,
His name Giuseppe, call'd more briefly, Beppo.

XXVI

He was a man as dusky as a Spaniard,
Sunburnt with travel, yet a portly figure;
Though colour'd, as it were, within a tan-yard,
He was a person both of sense and vigour —
A better seaman never yet did man yard:
And *she*, although her manners show'd no rigour,
Was deem'd a woman of the strictest principle,
So much as to be thought almost invincible.

XXVII

But several years elapsed since they had met;
Some people thought the ship was lost, and some
That he had somehow blunder'd into debt,
And did not like the thought of steering home:
And there were several offer'd any bet,
Or that he would, or that he would not come,
For most men (till by losing render'd sager)
Will back their own opinions with a wager.

XXVIII

'T is said that their last parting was pathetic,
As partings often are, or ought to be,
And their presentiment was quite prophetic
That they should never more each other see
(A sort of morbid feeling, half poetic,
Which I have known occur in two or three),
When kneeling on the shore upon her sad knee,
He left this Adriatic Ariadne.

XXIX

And Laura waited long, and wept a little,
And thought of wearing weeds, as well she might;
She almost lost all appetite for victual,
And could not sleep with ease alone at night;
She deem'd the window-frames and shutters brittle
Against a daring housebreaker or sprite,
And so she thought it prudent to connect her
With a vice-husband, *chiefly* to *protect her*.

XXX

She chose (and what is there they will not choose,
If only you will but oppose their choice?),
Till Beppo should return from his long cruise
And bid once more her faithful heart rejoice,
A man some women like, and yet abuse —
A coxcomb was he by the public voice;
A Count of wealth, they said, as well as quality,
And in his pleasures of great liberality.

XXXI

And then he was a Count, and then he knew
Music, and dancing, fiddling, French and Tuscan;
The last not easy, be it known to you,
For few Italians speak the right Etruscan.
He was a critic upon operas, too,
And knew all niceties of the sock and buskin;
And no Venetian audience could endure a
Song, scene, or air, when he cried 'seccatura!

XXXII

His 'bravo' was decisive, for that sound
Hush'd 'Academie' sigh'd in silent awe;
The fiddlers trembled as he look'd around,
For fear of some false note's detected flaw.
The 'prima donna's' tuneful heart would bound,
Dreading the deep damnation of his 'bah!'
Soprano, basso, even the contra-alto,
Wish'd him five fathom under the Rialto.

XXXIII

He patronised the Improvisatori,
Nay, could himself extemporise some stanzas,
Wrote rhymes, sang songs, could also tell a story,
Sold pictures, and was skilful in the dance as
Italians can be, though in this their glory
Must surely yield the palm to that which France has;
In short, he was a perfect cavaliero,
And to his very valet seem'd a hero.

XXXIV

Then he was faithful, too, as well as amorous,
So that no sort of female could complain,
Although they 're now and then a little clamorous;
He never put the pretty souls in pain;
His heart was one of those which most enamour us,
Wax to receive, and marble to retain.
He was a lover of the good old school,
Who still become more constant as they cool.

XXXV

No wonder such accomplishments should turn
A female head, however sage and steady,
With scarce a hope that Beppo could return, —
In law he was almost as good as dead, he
Nor sent, nor wrote, nor show'd the least concern,
And she had waited several years already;
And really if a man won't let us know
That he 's alive, he 's *dead*, or should be so.

XXXVI

Besides, within the Alps, to every woman
(Although, God knows, it is a grievous sin),
'T is, I may say, permitted to have *two* men;
I can't tell who first brought the custom in,
But 'Cavalier Serventes' are quite common,
And no one notices, nor cares a pin;
And we may call this (not to say the worst)
A *second* marriage which corrupts the *first*.

XXXVII

The word was formerly a 'Cicisbeo,'
But *that* is now grown vulgar and indecent;
The Spaniards call the person a '*Cortejo*,'
For the same mode subsists in Spain, though recent;
In short it reaches from the Po to Teio,
And may perhaps at last be o'er the sea sent.
But Heaven preserve Old England from such courses!
Or what becomes of damage and divorces?

XXXVIII

However, I still think, with all due deference
To the fair *single* part of the Creation,
That married ladies should preserve the preference
In *tête-à-tête* or general conversation —
And this I say without peculiar reference
To England, France, or any other nation —
Because they know the world, and are at ease,
And being natural, naturally please.

XXXIX

'T is true, your budding Miss is very charming,
But shy and awkward at first coming out,
So much alarm'd that she is quite alarming,
All Giggle, Blush; half Pertness and half Pout;
And glancing at *Mamma*, for fear there 's harm in
What you, she, it, or they, may be about,
The Nursery still lisps out in all they utter —
Besides, they always smell of bread and butter.

XL

But 'Cavalier Servente' is the phrase
Used in politest circles to express
This supernumerary slave, who stays
Close to the lady as a part of dress,
Her word the only law which he obeys.
His is no sinecure, as you may guess;
Coach, servants, gondola, he goes to call,
And carries fan and tippet, gloves and shawl.

XLI

With all its sinful doings, I must say,
That Italy 's a pleasant place to me,
Who love to see the Sun shine every day,
And vines (not nail'd to walls) from tree to tree
Festoon'd, much like the back scene of a play
Or melodrame, which people flock to see,
When the first act is ended by a dance
In vineyards copied from the south of France.

XLII

I like on Autumn evenings to ride out,
Without being forced to bid my groom be sure
My cloak is round his middle strapp'd about,
Because the skies are not the most secure;
I know too that, if stopp'd upon my route
Where the green alleys windingly allure,
Reeling with *grapes* red wagons choke the way, —
In England 't would be dung, dust, or a dray.

XLIII

I also like to dine on becaficas,
To see the Sun set, sure he 'll rise to-morrow,
Not through a misty morning twinkling weak as
A drunken man's dead eye in maudlin sorrow,
But with all Heaven t' himself; that day will break as
Beauteous as cloudless, nor be forced to borrow
That sort of farthing candlelight which glimmers
Where reeking London's smoky caldron simmers.

XLIV

I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,
Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,
And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,
With syllables which breathe of the sweet South,
And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in
That not a single accent seems uncouth,
Like our harsh northern whistling, grunting guttural,
Which we 're obliged to hiss, and spit, and sputter all.

XLV

I like the women too (forgive my folly),
From the rich peasant cheek of ruddy bronze,
And large black eyes that flash on you a volley
Of rays that say a thousand things at once,
To the high dama's brow, more melancholy,
But clear, and with a wild and liquid glance,
Heart on her lips, and soul within her eyes,
Soft as her clime, and sunny as her skies.

XLVI

Eve of the land which still is Paradise !
Italian beauty ! didst thou not inspire
Raphael, who died in thy embrace, and vies
With all we know of Heaven, or can desire,
In what he hath bequeath'd us ? — in what guise,
Though flashing from the fervour of the lyre,

Would *words* describe thy past and present glow,
While yet Canova can create below?

XLVII

'England! with all thy faults I love thee still,'
I said at Calais and have not forgot it;
I like to speak and lucubrate my fill;
I like the government (but that is not it);
I like the freedom of the press and quill;
I like the Habeas Corpus (when we 've got it);
I like a parliamentary debate,
Particularly when 't is not too late;

XLVIII

I like the taxes, when they 're not too many;
I like a seacoal fire, when not too dear;
I like a beef-steak, too, as well as any;
Have no objection to a pot of beer;
I like the weather, when it is not rainy,
That is, I like two months of every year.
And so God save the Regent, Church, and King!
Which means that I like all and every thing.

XLIX

Our standing army, and disbanded seamen,
Poor's rate, Reform, my own, the nation's debt,
Our little riots just to show we 're free men,
Our trifling bankruptcies in the Gazette,
Our cloudy climate, and our chilly women,
All these I can forgive, and those forget,
And greatly venerate our recent glories,
And wish they were not owing to the Tories.

L

But to my tale of Laura, — for I find
Digression is a sin, that by degrees
Becomes exceeding tedious to my mind,
And, therefore, may the reader too displease —
The gentle reader, who may wax unkind,
And caring little for the author's ease,
Insist on knowing what he means, a hard
And hapless situation for a bard.

LI

Oh that I had the art of easy writing
What should be easy reading! could I scale
Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
Those pretty poems never known to fail,
How quickly would I print (the world delighting)
A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale;
And sell you, mix'd with western sentimentalism,
Some samples of the finest Orientalism.

LII

But I am but a nameless sort of person
(A broken Dandy lately on my travels),
And take for rhyme, to hook my rambling verse on,
The first that Walker's Lexicon unravels,
And when I can't find that, I put a worse on,
Not caring as I ought for critics' cavils;
I 've half a mind to tumble down to prose,
But verse is more in fashion — so here goes.

LIII

The Count and Laura made their new arrangement,
Which lasted, as arrangements sometimes do,
For half a dozen years without estrangement;
They had their little differences, too;
Those jealous whiffs, which never any change meant:
In such affairs there probably are few
Who have not had this pouting sort of squabble,
From sinners of high station to the rabble.

LIV

But, on the whole, they were a happy pair,
As happy as unlawful love could make them;
The gentleman was fond, the lady fair,
Their chains so slight, 't was not worth while to break them:
The world beheld them with indulgent air;
The pious only wish'd 'the devil take them!'
He took them not; he very often waits,
And leaves old sinners to be young ones' baits.

LV

But they were young: Oh! what without our youth
Would love be! What would youth be without love!

Youth lends it joy, and sweetness, vigour, truth,
Heart, soul, and all that seems as from above;
But, languishing with years, it grows uncouth —
One of few things experience don't improve,
Which is, perhaps, the reason why old fellows
Are always so preposterously jealous.

LVI

It was the Carnival, as I have said
Some six and thirty stanzas back, and so
Laura the usual preparations made,
Which you do when your mind 's made up to go
To-night to Mrs. Boehm's masquerade,
Spectator or partaker in the show;
The only difference known between the cases
Is — *here*, we have six weeks of 'varnish'd faces.'

LVII

Laura, when dress'd, was (as I sang before)
A pretty woman as was ever seen,
Fresh as the Angel o'er a new inn door,
Or frontispiece of a new Magazine,
With all the fashions which the last month wore,
Colour'd, and silver paper leaved between
That and the title-page, for fear the press
Should soil with parts of speech the parts of dress.

LVIII

They went to the Ridotto; — 't is a hall
Where people dance, and sup, and dance again;
Its proper name, perhaps, were a masqued ball,
But that 's of no importance to my strain;
'T is (on a smaller scale) like our Vauxhall,
Excepting that it can't be spoilt by rain:
The company is 'mix'd' (the phrase I quote is
As much as saying, they 're below your notice);

LIX

For a 'mix'd company' implies that, save
Yourself and friends and half a hundred more
Whom you may bow to without looking grave,
The rest are but a vulgar set, the bore
Of public places, where they basely brave
The fashionable stare of twenty score
Of well-bred persons, call'd '*the World;*' but I,
Although I know them, really don't know why.

LX

This is the case in England; at least was
During the dynasty of Dandies, now
Perchance succeeded by some other class
Of imitated imitators: — how
Irreparably soon decline, alas!
The demagogues of fashion: all below
Is frail; how easily the world is lost
By love, or war, and now and then by frost!

LXI

Crush'd was Napoleon by the northern Thor,
Who knock'd his army down with icy hammer,
Stopp'd by the *elements*, like a whaler, or
A blundering novice in his new French grammar;
Good cause had he to doubt the chance of war,
And as for Fortune — but I dare not d—n her,
Because, were I to ponder to infinity,
The more I should believe in her divinity.

LXII

She rules the present, past, and all to be yet,
She gives us luck in lotteries, love, and marriage;
I cannot say that she 's done much for me yet;
Not that I mean her bounties to disparage,
We 've not yet closed accounts, and we shall see yet
How much she 'll make amends for past miscarriage;
Meantime the goddess I 'll no more importune,
Unless to thank her when she 's made my fortune.

LXIII

To turn, — and to return; — the devil take it!
This story slips for ever through my fingers,

Because, just as the stanza likes to make it,
It needs must be — and so it rather lingers;
This form of verse began, I can't well break it,
But must keep time and tune like public singers;
But if I once get through my present measure,
I 'll take another when I 'm next at leisure.

LXIV

They went to the Ridotto ('t is a place
To which I mean to go myself to-morrow,
Just to divert my thoughts a little space,
Because I 'm rather hippish, and may borrow
Some spirits, guessing at what kind of face
May lurk beneath each mask; and as my sorrow
Slackens its pace sometimes, I 'll make, or find,
Something shall leave it half an hour behind).

LXV

Now Laura moves along the joyous crowd,
Smiles in her eyes, and simpers on her lips;
To some she whispers, others speaks aloud;
To some she curtsies, and to some she dips,
Complains of warmth, and, this complaint avow'd,
Her lover brings the lemonade, she sips;
She then surveys, condemns, but pities still
Her dearest friends for being dress'd so ill.

LXVI

One has false curls, another too much paint,
A third — where did she buy that frightful turban?
A fourth 's so pale she fears she 's going to faint,
A fifth's look 's vulgar, dowdyish, and suburban,
A sixth's white silk has got a yellow taint,
A seventh's thin muslin surely will be her bane,
And lo! an eighth appears, — 'I 'll see no more!'
For fear, like Banquo's kings, they reach a score.

LXVII

Meantime, while she was thus at others gazing,
Others were levelling their looks at her;
She heard the men's half-whisper'd mode of praising,
And, till 't was done, determined not to stir;
The women only thought it quite amazing
That, at her time of life, so many were
Admirers still, — but men are so debased,
Those brazen creatures always suit their taste.

LXVIII

For my part, now, I ne'er could understand
Why naughty women — but I won't discuss
A thing which is a scandal to the land,
I only don't see why it should be thus;
And if I were but in a gown and band,
Just to entitle me to make a fuss,
I 'd preach on this till Wilberforce and Romilly
Should quote in their next speeches from my homily.

LXIX

While Laura thus was seen and seeing, smiling,
Talking, she knew not why and cared not what,
So that her female friends, with envy broiling,
Beheld her airs and triumph, and all that;
And well dress'd males still kept before her filing,
And passing bow'd and mingled with her chat;
More than the rest one person seem'd to stare
With pertinacity that 's rather rare.

LXX

He was a Turk, the colour of mahogany;
And Laura saw him, and at first was glad,
Because the Turks so much admire philogyny,
Although their usage of their wives is sad;
'T is said they use no better than a dog any
Poor woman whom they purchase like a pad:

They have a number, though they ne'er exhibit 'em,
Four wives by law, and concubines 'ad libitum.'

LXXI

They lock them up, and veil, and guard them daily,
They scarcely can behold their male relations,
So that their moments do not pass so gaily
As is supposed the case with northern nations;
Confinement, too, must make them look quite palely:
And as the Turks abhor long conversations,
Their days are either pass'd in doing nothing,
Or bathing, nursing, making love, and clothing.

LXXII

They cannot read, and so don't lisp in criticism;
Nor write, and so they don't affect the muse;
Were never caught in epigram or witticism,
Have no romances, sermons, plays, reviews, —
In harams learning soon would make a pretty schism!
But luckily these beauties are no 'Blues,'
No bustling Botherbys have they to show 'em
'That charming passage in the last new poem, —'

LXXIII

No solemn, antique gentleman of rhyme,
Who having angled all his life for fame,
And getting but a nibble at a time,
Still fussily keeps fishing on, the same
Small 'Triton of the minnows,' the sublime
Of mediocrity, the furious tame,
The echo's echo, usher of the school
Of female wits, boy bards — in short, a fool, —

LXXIV

A stalking oracle of awful phrase,
The approving '*Good!*' (by no means GOOD in law),
Humming like flies around the newest blaze,
The bluest of bluebottles you e'er saw,
Teasing with blame, excruciating with praise,
Gorging the little fame he gets all raw,
Translating tongues he knows not even by letter,
And sweating plays so middling, bad were better.

LXXV

One hates an author that 's *all author*, fellows
In foolscap uniforms turn'd up with ink,
So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,
One don't know what to say to them, or think,
Unless to puff them with a pair of bellows;
Of coxcombry's worst coxcombs e'en the pink
Are preferable to these shreds of paper,
These unquench'd snuffings of the midnight taper.

LXXVI

Of these same we see several, and of others,
Men of the world, who know the world like men,
Scott, Rogers, Moore, and all the better brothers,
Who think of something else besides the pen;
But for the children of the 'mighty mother's,'
The would-be wits and can't-be gentlemen,
I leave them to their daily 'tea is ready,'
Smug coterie, and literary lady.

LXXVII

The poor dear Mussulwomen whom I mention
Have none of these instructive pleasant people,
And *one* to them would seem a new invention,
Unknown as bells within a Turkish steeple;
I think 't would almost be worth while to pension
(Though best-sown projects very often reap ill)
A missionary author, just to preach
Our Christian usage of the parts of speech.

LXXVIII

No chemistry for them unfolds her gases,
No metaphysics are let loose in lectures,

No circulating library amasses
Religious novels, moral tales, and strictures
Upon the living manners, as they pass us;
No exhibition glares with annual pictures;
They stare not on the stars from out their attics,
Nor deal (thank God for that!) in mathematics.

LXXIX

Why I thank God for that is no great matter,
I have my reasons, you no doubt suppose,
And as, perhaps, they would not highly flatter,
I'll keep them for my life (to come) in prose;
I fear I have a little turn for satire,
And yet methinks the older that one grows
Inclines us more to laugh than scold, though laughter
Leaves us so doubly serious shortly after.

LXXX

Oh, Mirth and Innocence! Oh, Milk and Water!
Ye happy mixtures of more happy days!
In these sad centuries of sin and slaughter,
Abominable Man no more allays
His thirst with such pure beverage. No matter,
I love you both, and both shall have my praise:
Oh, for old Saturn's reign of sugar-candy!—
Meantime I drink to your return in brandy.

LXXXI

Our Laura's Turk still kept his eyes upon her,
Less in the Mussulman than Christian way,
Which seems to say, 'Madam, I do you honour,
And while I please to stare, you'll please to stay:'
Could staring win a woman, this had won her,
But Laura could not thus be led astray;
She had stood fire too long and well, to boggle
Even at this stranger's most outlandish ogle.

LXXXII

The morning now was on the point of breaking,
A turn of time at which I would advise
Ladies who have been dancing, or partaking
In any other kind of exercise,
To make their preparations for forsaking
The ball-room ere the sun begins to rise,
Because when once the lamps and candles fail,
His blushes make them look a little pale.

LXXXIII

I've seen some balls and revels in my time,
And stay'd them over for some silly reason,
And then I look'd (I hope it was no crime)
To see what lady best stood out the season;
And though I've seen some thousands in their prime,
Lovely and pleasing, and who still may please on,
I never saw but one (the stars withdrawn)
Whose bloom could after dancing dare the dawn.

LXXXIV

The name of this Aurora I'll not mention,
Although I might, for she was naught to me
More than that patent work of God's invention,
A charming woman whom we like to see;
But writing names would merit reprehension,
Yet if you like to find out this fair *she*,
At the next London or Parisian ball
You still may mark her cheek, out-blooming all.

LXXXV

Laura, who knew it would not do at all
To meet the daylight after seven hours sitting
Among three thousand people at a ball,
To make her curtsy thought it right and fitting;
The Count was at her elbow with her shawl,
And they the room were on the point of quitting,
When lo! those cursèd gondoliers had got
Just in the very place where they *should not*.

LXXXVI

In this they 're like our coachmen, and the cause
Is much the same — the crowd, and pulling, hauling,
With blasphemies enough to break their jaws,
They make a never intermitting bawling.
At home, our Bow-street gemmen keep the laws,
And here a sentry stands within your calling;
But for all that, there is a deal of swearing,
And nauseous words past mentioning or bearing.

LXXXVII

The Count and Laura found their boat at last,
And homeward floated o'er the silent tide,
Discussing all the dances gone and past;
The dancers and their dresses, too, beside;
Some little scandals eke: but all aghast
(As to their palace stairs the rowers glide)
Sate Laura by the side of her Adorer,
When lo ! the Mussulman was there before her.

LXXXVIII

'Sir,' said the Count, with brow exceeding grave,
'Your unexpected presence here will make
It necessary for myself to crave
Its import ? But perhaps 't is a mistake;
I hope it is so; and, at once to wave
All compliment, I hope so for *your* sake;
You understand my meaning, or you *shall.*'
'Sir' (quoth the Turk), ''t is no mistake at all.

LXXXIX

'That lady is *my wife!*' Much wonder paints
The lady's changing cheek, as well it might;
But where an Englishwoman sometimes faints,
Italian females don't do so outright;
They only call a little on their saints,
And then come to themselves, almost or quite:
Which saves much hartshorn, salts, and sprinkling faces,
And cutting stays, as usual in such cases.

XC

She said, — what could she say ? Why, not a word:
But the Count courteously invited in
The stranger, much appeased by what he heard:
'Such things, perhaps, we 'd best discuss within,'
Said he; 'don't let us make ourselves absurd
In public by a scene, nor raise a din,
For then the chief and only satisfaction
Will be much quizzing on the whole transaction.'

XCI

They enter'd and for coffee call'd — it came,
A beverage for Turks and Christians both,
Although the way they make it 's not the same.
Now Laura, much recover'd, or less loth
To speak, cries 'Beppo ! what 's your pagan name ?
Bless me ! your beard is of amazing growth !
And how came you to keep away so long ?
Are you not sensible 't was very wrong ?

XCII

'And are you *really, truly,* now a Turk ?
With any other women did you wive ?
Is 't true they use their fingers for a fork ?
Well, that 's the prettiest shawl — as I 'm alive !
You 'll give it me ? They say you eat no pork.
And how so many years did you contrive
To — bless me ! did I ever ? No, I never
Saw a man grown so yellow ! How 's your liver ?

XCIII

'Beppo ! that beard of yours becomes you not;
It shall be shaved before you 're a day older:
Why do you wear it ? Oh, I had forgot —
Pray don't you think the weather here is colder ?

How do I look? You shan't stir from this spot
In that queer dress, for fear that some beholder
Should find you out, and make the story known.
How short your hair is! Lord, how grey it ’s grown!’

XCIV

What answer Beppo made to these demands
Is more than I know. He was cast away
About where Troy stood once, and nothing stands;
Became a slave of course, and for his pay
Had bread and bastinadoes, till some bands
Of pirates landing in a neighbouring bay,
He join'd the rogues and prosper'd, and became
A renegado of indifferent fame.

XCV

But he grew rich, and with his riches grew so
Keen the desire to see his home again,
He thought himself in duty bound to do so,
And not be always thieving on the main;
Lonely he felt, at times, as Robin Crusoe,
And so he hired a vessel come from Spain,
Bound for Corfu: she was a fine polacca,
Mann'd with twelve hands, and laden with tobacco.

XCVI

Himself, and much (heaven knows how gotten!) cash
He then embark'd with risk of life and limb,
And got clear off, although the attempt was rash;
He said that *Providence* protected him —
For my part, I say nothing, lest we clash
In our opinions: — well, the ship was trim,
Set sail, and kept her reckoning fairly on,
Except three days of calm when off Cape Bonn.

XCVII

They reach'd the island, he transferr'd his lading
And self and live-stock to another bottom,
And pass'd for a true Turkey-merchant, trading
With goods of various names, but I forgot ’em.
However, he got off by this evading,
Or else the people would perhaps have shot him;
And thus at Venice landed to reclaim
His wife, religion, house, and Christian name.

XCVIII

His wife received, the patriarch re-baptized him
(He made the church a present, by the way);
He then threw off the garments which disguised him,
And borrow'd the Count's smallclothes for a day:
His friends the more for his long absence prized him,
Finding he ’d wherewithal to make them gay,
With dinners, where he oft became the laugh of them,
For stories — but *I* don't believe the half of them.

XCIX

Whate'er his youth had suffer'd, his old age
With wealth and talking make him some amends;
Though Laura sometimes put him in a rage,
I ’ve heard the Count and he were always friends.
My pen is at the bottom of a page,
Which being finish'd, here the story ends;
'T is to be wish'd it had been sooner done,
But stories somehow lengthen when begun.

ODE ON VENICE

I

Oh Venice! Venice! when thy marble walls
Are level with the waters, there shall be
A cry of nations o'er thy sunken halls,
A loud lament along the sweeping sea!
If I, a northern wanderer, weep for thee,
What should thy sons do? — anything but weep:
And yet they only murmur in their sleep.

In contrast with their fathers — as the slime,
The dull green ooze of the receding deep,
Is with the dashing of the spring-tide foam,
That drives the sailor shipless to his home,
Are they to those that were; and thus they creep,
Crouching and crab-like, through their sapping streets.
Oh agony! that centuries should reap
No mellower harvest! Thirteen hundred years
Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and tears;
And every monument the stranger meets,
Church, palace, pillar, as a mourner greets.
And even the Lion all subdued appears,
And the harsh sound of the barbarian drum,
With dull and daily dissonance, repeats
The echo of thy tyrant's voice along
The soft waves, once all musical to song,
That heaved beneath the moonlight with the throng
Of gondolas — and to the busy hum
Of cheerful creatures, whose most sinful deeds
Were but the overbeating of the heart,
And flow of too much happiness, which needs
The aid of age to turn its course apart
From the luxuriant and voluptuous flood
Of sweet sensations, battling with the blood.
But these are better than the gloomy errors,
The weeds of nations in their last decay,
When Vice walks forth with her unsoften'd terrors,
And Mirth is madness, and but smiles to slay;
And Hope is nothing but a false delay,
The sick man's lightning half an hour ere death,
When Faintness, the last mortal birth of Pain,
And apathy of limb, the dull beginning
Of the cold staggering race which Death is winning,
Steals vein by vein and pulse by pulse away;
Yet so relieving the o'er-tortured clay,
To him appears renewal of his breath,
And freedom the mere numbness of his chain; —
And then he talks of life, and how again
He feels his spirits soaring — albeit weak,
And of the fresher air, which he would seek;
And as he whispers knows not that he gasps,
That his thin finger feels not what it clasps,
And so the film comes o'er him — and the dizzy
Chamber swims round and round — and shadows busy,
At which he vainly catches, flit and gleam,
Till the last rattle chokes the strangled scream,
And all is ice and blackness, — and the earth
That which it was the moment ere our birth.

II

There is no hope for nations! Search the page
  Of many thousand years — the daily scene,
The flow and ebb of each recurring age,
  The everlasting *to be* which *hath been*,
  Hath taught us nought or little: still we lean
On things that rot beneath our weight, and wear
Our strength away in wrestling with the air;
For 't is our nature strikes us down: the beasts
Slaughter'd in hourly hecatombs for feasts
Are of as high an order — they must go
Even where their driver goads them, though to slaughter.
Ye men, who pour your blood for kings as water,
What have they given your children in return?
A heritage of servitude and woes,
A blindfold bondage, where your hire is blows.
What! do not yet the red-hot ploughshares burn,
O'er which you stumble in a false ordeal,
And deem this proof of loyalty the *real;*
Kissing the hand that guides you to your scars,
And glorying as you tread the glowing bars?
All that your sires have left you, all that Time
Bequeaths of free, and History of sublime,
Spring from a different theme! — Ye see and read,
Admire and sigh, and then succumb and bleed!
Save the few spirits, who, despite of all,
And worse than all, the sudden crimes engender'd

By the down-thundering of the prison-wall,
And thirst to swallow the sweet waters tender'd,
Gushing from Freedom's fountains — when the crowd,
Madden'd with centuries of drought, are loud,
And trample on each other to obtain
The cup which brings oblivion of a chain
Heavy and sore, — in which long yoked they plough'd
The sand, — or if there sprung the yellow grain,
'T was not for them, their necks were too much bow'd,
And their dead palates chew'd the cud of pain: —
Yes! the few spirits — who, despite of deeds
Which they abhor, confound not with the cause
Those momentary starts from Nature's laws,
Which, like the pestilence and earthquake, smite
But for a term, then pass, and leave the earth
With all her seasons to repair the blight
With a few summers, and again put forth
Cities and generations — fair, when free —
For, Tyranny, there blooms no bud for thee!

III

Glory and Empire! once upon these towers
With Freedom — godlike Triad! how ye sate!
The league of mightiest nations, in those hours
When Venice was an envy, might abate,
But did not quench, her spirit — in her fate
All were enwrapp'd: the feasted monarchs knew
And loved their hostess, nor could learn to hate,
Although they humbled. With the kingly few
The many felt, for from all days and climes
She was the voyager's worship; — even her crimes
Were of the softer order — born of Love,
She drank no blood, nor fatten'd on the dead,
But gladden'd where her harmless conquests spread;
For these restored the Cross, that from above
Hallow'd her sheltering banners, which incessant
Flew between earth and the unholy Crescent,
Which, if it waned and dwindled, Earth may thank
The city it has clothed in chains, which clank
Now, creaking in the ears of those who owe
The name of Freedom to her glorious struggles;
Yet she but shares with them a common woe,
And call'd the 'kingdom' of a conquering foe, —
But knows what all and, most of all, *we* know —
With what set gilded terms a tyrant juggles!

IV

The name of Commonwealth is past and gone
O'er the three fractions of the groaning globe;
Venice is crush'd, and Holland deigns to own
A sceptre, and endures the purple robe.
If the free Switzer yet bestrides alone
His chainless mountains, 't is but for a time,
For tyranny of late is cunning grown,
And in its own good season tramples down
The sparkles of our ashes. One great clime,
Whose vigorous offspring by dividing ocean
Are kept apart and nursed in the devotion
Of Freedom, which their fathers fought for, and
Bequeath'd, a heritage of heart and hand,
And proud distinction from each other land,
Whose sons must bow them at a monarch's motion,
As if his senseless sceptre were a wand
Full of the magic of exploded science, —
Still one great clime, in full and free defiance,
Yet rears her crest, unconquer'd and sublime,
Above the far Atlantic! — She has taught
Her Esau-brethren that the haughty flag,
The floating fence of Albion's feebler crag,
May strike to those whose red right hands have bought

Rights cheaply earn'd with blood. — Still, still, for ever
Better, though each man's life-blood were a river,
That it should flow and overflow, than creep
Through thousand lazy channels in our veins,
Damm'd like the dull canal with locks and chains,
And moving, as a sick man in his sleep,
Three paces and then faltering: — better be
Where the extinguish'd Spartans still are free,
In their proud charnel of Thermopylæ,
Than stagnate in our marsh, — or o'er the deep
Fly, and one current to the ocean add,
One spirit to the souls our fathers had,
One freeman more, America, to thee!

THE PROPHECY OF DANTE

> 'T is the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
> And coming events cast their shadows before.'
>
> CAMPBELL.

DEDICATION

LADY! if for the cold and cloudy clime
  Where I was born, but where I would not die,
  Of the great Poet-Sire of Italy
I dare to build the imitative rhyme,
Harsh Runic copy of the South's sublime,
  THOU art the cause; and howsoever I
  Fall short of his immortal harmony,
Thy gentle heart will pardon me the crime.
Thou, in the pride of Beauty and of Youth,
  Spakest; and for thee to speak and be obey'd
Are one; but only in the sunny South
  Such sounds are utter'd, and such charms display'd,
So sweet a language from so fair a mouth —
  Ah! to what effort would it not persuade?

RAVENNA, *June* 21, 1819.

PREFACE

In the course of a visit to the city of Ravenna in the summer of 1819, it was suggested to the author that having composed something on the subject of Tasso's confinement, he should do the same on Dante's exile, — the tomb of the poet forming one of the principal objects of interest in that city, both to the native and to the stranger.

'On this hint I spake,' and the result has been the following four cantos, in terza rima, now offered to the reader. If they are understood and approved, it is my purpose to continue the poem in various other cantos to its natural conclusion in the present age. The reader is requested to suppose that Dante addresses him in the interval between the conclusion of the *Divina Commedia* and his death, and shortly before the latter event, foretelling the fortunes of Italy in general in the ensuing centuries. In adopting this plan I have had in my mind the *Cassandra* of Lycophron, and the Prophecy of Nereus by Horace, as well as the Prophecies of Holy Writ. The measure adopted is the terza rima of Dante, which I am not aware to have seen hitherto tried in our language, except it may be by Mr. Hayley, of whose translation I never saw but one extract, quoted in the notes to *Caliph Vathek*; so that — if I do not err — this poem may be considered as a metrical experiment. The cantos are short, and about the same length of those of the poet, whose name I have borrowed, and most probably taken in vain.

Amongst the inconveniences of authors in the present day, it is difficult for any who have a name, good or bad, to escape translation. I have had the fortune to see the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* translated into Italian versi sciolti, — that is, a poem written in the *Spenserean stanza* into *blank verse*, without regard to the natural divisions of the stanza or of the sense. If the present poem, being on a national topic, should chance to undergo the same fate, I would request the Italian reader to remember that when I have failed in the imitation of his great 'Padre Alighier,' I have failed in imitating that which all study and few understand, since to this very day it is not yet settled what was the meaning of the allegory in the first canto of the *Inferno*, unless Count Marchetti's ingenious and probable conjecture may be considered as having decided the question.

He may also pardon my failure the more, as I am not quite sure that he would be pleased with my success, since the Italians, with a pardonable nationality, are particularly jealous of all that is left them as a nation — their literature; and in the present bitterness of the classic and romantic war, are but ill-disposed to permit a foreigner even to approve or imitate them, without finding some fault with his ultramontane presumption. I can easily enter into all this, knowing what would be thought in England of an Italian imitator of Milton, or if a translation of Monti, or Pindemonte, or Arici, should be held up to the rising generation as a model for their future poetical essays.

But I perceive that I am deviating into an address to the Italian reader, when my business is with the English one; and be they few or many, I must take my leave of both.

CANTO THE FIRST

Once more in man's frail world! which I had left
So long that 't was forgotten; and I feel
The weight of clay again, — too soon bereft
Of the immortal vision which could heal
My earthly sorrows, and to God's own skies
Lift me from that deep gulf without repeal,
Where late my ears rung with the damnèd cries
Of souls in hopeless bale; and from that place
Of lesser torment, whence men may arise
Pure from the fire to join the angelic race;
Midst whom my own bright Beatricë bless'd
My spirit with her light; and to the base
Of the eternal Triad, — first, last, best,
Mysterious, three, sole, infinite, great God!
Soul universal! — led the mortal guest
Unblasted by the glory, though he trod
From star to star to reach the almighty throne.
Oh Beatricë! whose sweet limbs the sod
So long hath press'd and the cold marble stone,
Thou sole pure seraph of my earliest love,
Love so ineffable and so alone,
That nought on earth could more my bosom move,
And meeting thee in heaven was but to meet
That without which my soul, like the arkless dove,
Had wander'd still in search of, nor her feet
Relieved her wing till found, — without thy light
My paradise had still been incomplete.
Since my tenth sun gave summer to my sight
Thou wert my life, the essence of my thought,
Loved ere I knew the name of love, and bright
Still in these dim old eyes, now overwrought
With the world's war and years and banishment
And tears for thee, by other woes untaught;
For mine is not a nature to be bent
By tyrannous faction and the brawling crowd,
And though the long, long conflict hath been spent
In vain, and never more (save when the cloud
Which overhangs the Apennine, my mind's eye
Pierces to fancy Florence, once so proud
Of me) can I return, though but to die,
Unto my native soil, — they have not yet
Quench'd the old exile's spirit, stern and high.
But the sun, though not overcast, must set,
And the night cometh; I am old in days,
And deeds, and contemplation, and have met
Destruction face to face in all his ways.
The world hath left me, what it found me, pure,
And if I have not gather'd yet its praise,
I sought it not by any baser lure.
Man wrongs, and Time avenges, and my name
May form a monument not all obscure
(Though such was not my ambition's end or aim),
To add to the vain-glorious list of those
Who dabble in the pettiness of fame,
And make men's fickle breath the wind that blows
Their sail, and deem it glory to be class'd
With conquerors and virtue's other foes
In bloody chronicles of ages past.
I would have had my Florence great and free:
Oh Florence! Florence! unto me thou wast
Like that Jerusalem which the almighty He
Wept over, 'but thou wouldst not!' As the bird
Gathers its young, I would have gather'd thee
Beneath a parent pinion, hadst thou heard
My voice; but as the adder, deaf and fierce,

Against the breast that cherish'd thee was stirr'd
Thy venom, and my state thou didst amerce,
And doom this body forfeit to the fire.
Alas! how bitter is his country's curse
To him who *for* that country would expire,
But did not merit to expire *by* her,
And loves her, loves her even in her ire.
The day may come when she will cease to err,
The day may come she would be proud to have
The dust she dooms to scatter, and transfer
Of him, whom she denied a home, the grave.
But this shall not be granted; let my dust
Lie where it falls; nor shall the soil which gave
Me breath, but in her sudden fury thrust
Me forth to breathe elsewhere, so reassume
My indignant bones, because her angry gust
Forsooth is over and repeal'd her doom:
No, she denied me what was mine — my roof,
And shall not have what is not hers — my tomb.
Too long her armèd wrath hath kept aloof
The breast which would have bled for her, the heart
That beat, the mind that was temptation proof,
The man who fought, toil'd, travell'd, and each part
Of a true citizen fulfill'd, and saw
For his reward the Guelf's ascendant art
Pass his destruction even into a law.
These things are not made for forgetfulness,
Florence shall be forgotten first; too raw
The wound, too deep the wrong, and the distress
Of such endurance too prolong'd to make
My pardon greater, her injustice less,
Though late repented. Yet — yet for her sake
I feel some fonder yearnings, and for thine,
My own Beatricë, I would hardly take
Vengeance upon the land which once was mine,
And still is hallow'd by thy dust's return,
Which would protect the murderess like a shrine
And save ten thousand foes by thy sole urn.
Though, like old Marius from Minturnæ's marsh
And Carthage ruins, my lone breast may burn
At times with evil feelings hot and harsh,
And sometimes the last pangs of a vile foe
Writhe in a dream before me and o'erarch
My brow with hopes of triumph, — let them go!
Such are the last infirmities of those
Who long have suffer'd more than mortal woe,
And yet, being mortal still, have no repose
But on the pillow of Revenge — Revenge,
Who sleeps to dream of blood, and waking glows
With the oft-baffled, slakeless thirst of change,
When we shall mount again, and they that trod
Be trampled on, while Death and Atë range
O'er humbled heads and sever'd necks. — Great God!
Take these thoughts from me; to thy hands I yield
My many wrongs, and thine almighty rod
Will fall on those who smote me, — be my shield!
As thou hast been in peril, and in pain,
In turbulent cities, and the tented field,
In toil, and many troubles borne in vain
For Florence. I appeal from her to Thee!
Thee, whom I late saw in thy loftiest reign,
Even in that glorious vision, which to see
And live was never granted until now,
And yet thou hast permitted this to me.
Alas! with what a weight upon my brow
The sense of earth and earthly things come back,
Corrosive passions, feelings dull and low,
The heart's quick throb upon the mental rack,
Long day, and dreary night; the retrospect

But I perceive that I am deviating into an address to the Italian reader, when my business is with the English one; and be they few or many, I must take my leave of both.

CANTO THE FIRST

ONCE more in man's frail world! which I had left
So long that 't was forgotten; and I feel
The weight of clay again, — too soon bereft
Of the immortal vision which could heal
My earthly sorrows, and to God's own skies
Lift me from that deep gulf without repeal,
Where late my ears rung with the damnèd cries
Of souls in hopeless bale; and from that place
Of lesser torment, whence men may arise
Pure from the fire to join the angelic race;
Midst whom my own bright Beatricë bless'd
My spirit with her light; and to the base
Of the eternal Triad, — first, last, best,
Mysterious, three, sole, infinite, great God!
Soul universal! — led the mortal guest
Unblasted by the glory, though he trod
From star to star to reach the almighty throne.
Oh Beatricë! whose sweet limbs the sod
So long hath press'd and the cold marble stone,
Thou sole pure seraph of my earliest love,
Love so ineffable and so alone,
That nought on earth could more my bosom move,
And meeting thee in heaven was but to meet
That without which my soul, like the arkless dove,
Had wander'd still in search of, nor her feet
Relieved her wing till found, — without thy light
My paradise had still been incomplete.
Since my tenth sun gave summer to my sight
Thou wert my life, the essence of my thought,
Loved ere I knew the name of love, and bright
Still in these dim old eyes, now overwrought
With the world's war and years and banishment
And tears for thee, by other woes untaught;
For mine is not a nature to be bent
By tyrannous faction and the brawling crowd,
And though the long, long conflict hath been spent
In vain, and never more (save when the cloud
Which overhangs the Apennine, my mind's eye
Pierces to fancy Florence, once so proud
Of me) can I return, though but to die,
Unto my native soil, — they have not yet
Quench'd the old exile's spirit, stern and high.
But the sun, though not overcast, must set,
And the night cometh; I am old in days,
And deeds, and contemplation, and have met
Destruction face to face in all his ways.
The world hath left me, what it found me, pure,
And if I have not gather'd yet its praise,
I sought it not by any baser lure.
Man wrongs, and Time avenges, and my name
May form a monument not all obscure
(Though such was not my ambition's end or aim),
To add to the vain-glorious list of those
Who dabble in the pettiness of fame,
And make men's fickle breath the wind that blows
Their sail, and deem it glory to be class'd
With conquerors and virtue's other foes
In bloody chronicles of ages past.
I would have had my Florence great and free:
Oh Florence! Florence! unto me thou wast
Like that Jerusalem which the almighty He
Wept over, 'but thou wouldst not!' As the bird
Gathers its young, I would have gather'd thee
Beneath a parent pinion, hadst thou heard
My voice; but as the adder, deaf and fierce,

Against the breast that cherish'd thee was stirr'd
Thy venom, and my state thou didst amerce,
And doom this body forfeit to the fire.
Alas! how bitter is his country's curse
To him who *for* that country would expire,
But did not merit to expire *by* her,
And loves her, loves her even in her ire.
The day may come when she will cease to err,
The day may come she would be proud to have
The dust she dooms to scatter, and transfer
Of him, whom she denied a home, the grave.
But this shall not be granted; let my dust
Lie where it falls; nor shall the soil which gave
Me breath, but in her sudden fury thrust
Me forth to breathe elsewhere, so reassume
My indignant bones, because her angry gust
Forsooth is over and repeal'd her doom:
No, she denied me what was mine — my roof,
And shall not have what is not hers — my tomb.
Too long her armèd wrath hath kept aloof
The breast which would have bled for her, the heart
That beat, the mind that was temptation proof,
The man who fought, toil'd, travell'd, and each part
Of a true citizen fulfill'd, and saw
For his reward the Guelf's ascendant art
Pass his destruction even into a law.
These things are not made for forgetfulness,
Florence shall be forgotten first; too raw
The wound, too deep the wrong, and the distress
Of such endurance too prolong'd to make
My pardon greater, her injustice less,
Though late repented. Yet — yet for her sake
I feel some fonder yearnings, and for thine,
My own Beatricë, I would hardly take
Vengeance upon the land which once was mine,
And still is hallow'd by thy dust's return,
Which would protect the murderess like a shrine
And save ten thousand foes by thy sole urn.
Though, like old Marius from Minturnæ's marsh
And Carthage ruins, my lone breast may burn
At times with evil feelings hot and harsh,
And sometimes the last pangs of a vile foe
Writhe in a dream before me and o'erarch
My brow with hopes of triumph, — let them go!
Such are the last infirmities of those
Who long have suffer'd more than mortal woe,
And yet, being mortal still, have no repose
But on the pillow of Revenge — Revenge,
Who sleeps to dream of blood, and waking glows
With the oft-baffled, slakeless thirst of change,
When we shall mount again, and they that trod
Be trampled on, while Death and Atë range
O'er humbled heads and sever'd necks. — Great God!
Take these thoughts from me; to thy hands I yield
My many wrongs, and thine almighty rod
Will fall on those who smote me, — be my shield!
As thou hast been in peril, and in pain,
In turbulent cities, and the tented field,
In toil, and many troubles borne in vain
For Florence. I appeal from her to Thee!
Thee, whom I late saw in thy loftiest reign,
Even in that glorious vision, which to see
And live was never granted until now,
And yet thou hast permitted this to me.
Alas! with what a weight upon my brow
The sense of earth and earthly things come back,
Corrosive passions, feelings dull and low,
The heart's quick throb upon the mental rack,
Long day, and dreary night; the retrospect

Of half a century bloody and black,
And the frail few years I may yet expect
Hoary and hopeless, but less hard to bear,
For I have been too long and deeply wreck'd
On the lone rock of desolate Despair
To lift my eyes more to the passing sail
Which shuns that reef so horrible and bare;
Nor raise my voice — for who would heed my wail?
I am not of this people nor this age,
And yet my harpings will unfold a tale
Which shall preserve these times when not a page
Of their perturbèd annals could attract
An eye to gaze upon their civil rage,
Did not my verse embalm full many an act
Worthless as they who wrought it. 'T is the doom
Of spirits of my order to be rack'd
In life, to wear their hearts out, and consume
Their days in endless strife, and die alone;
Then future thousands crowd around their tomb,
And pilgrims come from climes where they have known
The name of him, who now is but a name,
And wasting homage o'er the sullen stone,
Spread his — by him unheard, unheeded — fame.
And mine at least hath cost me dear: to die
Is nothing; but to wither thus, to tame
My mind down from its own infinity,
To live in narrow ways with little men,
A common sight to every common eye,
A wanderer, while even wolves can find a den,
Ripp'd from all kindred, from all home, all things
That make communion sweet, and soften pain —
To feel me in the solitude of kings
Without the power that makes them bear a crown,
To envy every dove his nest and wings
Which waft him where the Apennine looks down
On Arno, till he perches, it may be,
Within my all inexorable town,
Where yet my boys are, and that fatal she,
Their mother, the cold partner who hath brought
Destruction for a dowry, — this to see
And feel, and know without repair, hath taught
A bitter lesson; but it leaves me free:
I have not vilely found, nor basely sought,
They made an Exile — not a slave of me.

CANTO THE SECOND

The Spirit of the fervent days of Old,
When words were things that came to pass, and thought
Flash'd o'er the future, bidding men behold
Their children's children's doom already brought
Forth from the abyss of time which is to be,
The chaos of events, where lie half-wrought
Shapes that must undergo mortality, —
What the great Seers of Israel wore within,
That spirit was on them, and is on me.
And if, Cassandra-like, amidst the din
Of conflict none will hear, or hearing heed
This voice from out the Wilderness, the sin
Be theirs, and my own feelings be my meed,
The only guerdon I have ever known.
Hast thou not bled? and hast thou still to bleed,
Italia? Ah! to me such things, foreshown
With dim sepulchral light, bid me forget
In thine irreparable wrongs my own.
We can have but one country, and even yet
Thou 'rt mine — my bones shall be within thy breast,
My soul within thy language, which once set
With our old Roman sway in the wide West;
But I will make another tongue arise
As lofty and more sweet, in which express'd
The hero's ardour, or the lover's sighs,
Shall find alike such sounds for every theme

That every word, as brilliant as thy skies,
Shall realise a poet's proudest dream,
And make thee Europe's nightingale of song;
So that all present speech to thine shall seem
The note of meaner birds, and every tongue
Confess its barbarism when compared with thine.
This shalt thou owe to him thou didst so wrong,
Thy Tuscan Bard, the banish'd Ghibelline.
Woe! woe! the veil of coming centuries
Is rent, — a thousand years which yet supine
Lie like the ocean waves ere winds arise,
Heaving in dark and sullen undulation,
Float from eternity into these eyes;
The storms yet sleep, the clouds still keep their station,
The unborn earthquake yet is in the womb,
The bloody chaos yet expects creation,
But all things are disposing for thy doom;
The elements await but for the word,
'Let there be darkness!' and thou grow'st a tomb!
Yes! thou, so beautiful, shalt feel the sword;
Thou, Italy! so fair that Paradise,
Revived in thee, blooms forth to man restored:
Ah! must the sons of Adam lose it twice?
Thou, Italy! whose ever golden fields,
Plough'd by the sunbeams solely, would suffice
For the world's granary; thou, whose sky heaven gilds
With brighter stars, and robes with deeper blue;
Thou, in whose pleasant places Summer builds
Her palace, in whose cradle Empire grew,
And form'd the Eternal City's ornaments
From spoils of kings whom freemen overthrew;
Birthplace of heroes, sanctuary of saints,
Where earthly first, then heavenly glory made
Her home; thou, all which fondest fancy paints,
And finds her prior vision but portray'd
In feeble colours, when the eye — from the Alp
Of horrid snow, and rock, and shaggy shade
Of desert-loving pine, whose emerald scalp
Nods to the storm — dilates and dotes o'er thee,
And wistfully implores, as 't were, for help
To see thy sunny fields, my Italy,
Nearer and nearer yet, and dearer still
The more approach'd, and dearest were they free;
Thou — thou must wither to each tyrant's will.
The Goth hath been, the German, Frank, and Hun
Are yet to come; and on the imperial hill
Ruin, already proud of the deeds done
By the old barbarians, there awaits the new,
Throned on the Palatine, while lost and won
Rome at her feet lies bleeding; and the hue
Of human sacrifice and Roman slaughter
Troubles the clotted air, of late so blue,
And deepens into red the saffron water
Of Tiber, thick with dead. The helpless priest,
And still more helpless nor less holy daughter,
Vow'd to their God, have shrieking fled, and ceased
Their ministry. The nations take their prey,
Iberian, Almain, Lombard, and the beast
And bird, wolf, vulture, more humane than they
Are; these but gorge the flesh and lap the gore
Of the departed, and then go their way;
But those, the human savages, explore
All paths of torture, and insatiate yet,
With Ugolino-hunger prowl for more.
Nine moons shall rise o'er scenes like this and set;
The chiefless army of the dead, which late
Beneath the traitor Prince's banner met,
Hath left its leader's ashes at the gate;
Had but the royal Rebel lived, perchance
Thou hadst been spared, but his involved thy fate.
Oh! Rome, the spoiler or the spoil of France,
From Brennus to the Bourbon, never, never

Shall foreign standard to thy walls advance
But Tiber shall become a mournful river.
Oh! when the strangers pass the Alps and Po,
Crush them, ye rocks! floods whelm them, and for ever!
Why sleep the idle avalanches so,
To topple on the lonely pilgrim's head?
Why doth Eridanus but overflow
The peasant's harvest from his turbid bed?
Were not each barbarous horde a nobler prey?
Over Cambyses' host the desert spread
Her sandy ocean, and the sea waves' sway
Roll'd over Pharaoh and his thousands,—why,
Mountains and waters, do ye not as they?
And you, ye men! Romans, who dare not die,
Sons of the conquerors who overthrew
Those who o'erthrew proud Xerxes, where yet lie
The dead whose tomb Oblivion never knew,
Are the Alps weaker than Thermopylæ?
Their passes more alluring to the view
Of an invader? is it they, or ye,
That to each host the mountain-gate unbar,
And leave the march in peace, the passage free?
Why, Nature's self detains the victor's car,
And makes your land impregnable, if earth
Could be so: but alone she will not war,
Yet aids the warrior worthy of his birth
In a soil where the mothers bring forth men:
Not so with those whose souls are little worth;
For them no fortress can avail,—the den
Of the poor reptile which preserves its sting
Is more secure than walls of adamant, when
The hearts of those within are quivering.
Are ye not brave? Yes, yet the Ausonian soil
Hath hearts, and hands, and arms, and hosts to bring
Against Oppression; but how vain the toil,
While still Division sows the seeds of woe
And weakness, till the stranger reaps the spoil.
Oh! my own beauteous land! so long laid low,
So long the grave of thy own children's hopes,
When there is but required a single blow
To break the chain, yet—yet the Avenger stops,
And Doubt and Discord step 'twixt thine and thee,
And join their strength to that which with thee copes;
What is there wanting then to set thee free,
And show thy beauty in its fullest light?
To make the Alps impassable; and we,
Her sons, may do this with *one* deed—Unite.

CANTO THE THIRD

From out the mass of never-dying ill,
The Plague, the Prince, the Stranger, and the Sword,
Vials of wrath but emptied to refill
And flow again, I cannot all record
That crowds on my prophetic eye: the earth
And ocean written o'er would not afford
Space for the annal, yet it shall go forth.
Yes, all, though not by human pen, is graven:
There where the farthest suns and stars have birth,
Spread like a banner at the gate of heaven,
The bloody scroll of our millennial wrongs
Waves, and the echo of our groans is driven
Athwart the sound of archangelic songs;
And Italy, the martyr'd nation's gore,
Will not in vain arise to where belongs
Omnipotence and mercy evermore:
Like to a harpstring stricken by the wind,
The sound of her lament shall, rising o'er
The seraph voices, touch the Almighty Mind.
Meantime I, humblest of thy sons, and of
Earth's dust by immortality refined
To sense and suffering, though the vain may scoff,
And tyrants threat, and meeker victims bow

Before the storm because its breath is rough,
To thee, my country! whom before as now
I loved and love, devote the mournful lyre
And melancholy gift high powers allow
To read the future; and if now my fire
Is not as once it shone o'er thee, forgive!
I but foretell thy fortunes — then expire;
Think not that I would look on them and live.
A spirit forces me to see and speak,
And for my guerdon grants *not* to survive;
My heart shall be pour'd over thee and break.
Yet for a moment, ere I must resume
Thy sable web of sorrow, let me take
Over the gleams that flash athwart thy gloom
A softer glimpse. Some stars shine through thy night,
And many meteors, and above thy tomb
Leans sculptured Beauty, which Death cannot blight;
And from thine ashes boundless spirits rise
To give thee honour and the earth delight;
Thy soil shall still be pregnant with the wise,
The gay, the learn'd, the generous, and the brave,
Native to thee as summer to thy skies,
Conquerors on foreign shores and the far wave,
Discoverers of new worlds which take their name;
For *thee* alone they have no arm to save,
And all thy recompense is in their fame,
A noble one to them, but not to thee —
Shall they be glorious and thou still the same?
Oh! more than these illustrious far shall be
The being — and even yet he may be born —
The mortal saviour who shall set thee free,
And see thy diadem, so changed and worn
By fresh barbarians, on thy brow replaced;
And the sweet sun replenishing thy morn,
Thy moral morn, too long with clouds defaced
And noxious vapours from Avernus risen,
Such as all they must breathe who are debased
By servitude and have the mind in prison.
Yet through this centuried eclipse of woe
Some voices shall be heard, and earth shall listen;
Poets shall follow in the path I show,
And make it broader; the same brilliant sky
Which cheers the birds to song shall bid them glow,
And raise their notes as natural and high;
Tuneful shall be their numbers; they shall sing
Many of love, and some of liberty,
But few shall soar upon that eagle's wing,
And look in the sun's face with eagle's gaze,
All free and fearless as the feather'd king,
But fly more near the earth; how many a phrase
Sublime shall lavish'd be on some small prince
In all the prodigality of praise!
And language, eloquently false, evince
The harlotry of genius, which, like beauty,
Too oft forgets its own self-reverence,
And looks on prostitution as a duty.
He who once enters in a tyrant's hall
As guest is slave, his thoughts become a booty,
And the first day which sees the chain enthral
A captive, sees his half of manhood gone —
The soul's emasculation saddens all
His spirit. Thus the Bard too near the throne
Quails from his inspiration, bound to *please*, —
How servile is the task to please alone,
To smooth the verse to suit his sovereign's ease
And royal leisure, nor too much prolong
Aught save his eulogy, and find, and seize,
Or force, or forge fit argument of song!
Thus trammell'd, thus condemn'd to Flattery's trebles,
He toils through all, still trembling to be wrong:
For fear some noble thoughts, like heavenly rebels,
Should rise up in high treason to his brain,

He sings, as the Athenian spoke, with pebbles
In ’s mouth, lest truth should stammer through his strain.
But out of the long file of sonneteers
There shall be some who will not sing in vain,
And he, their prince, shall rank among my peers,
And love shall be his torment; but his grief
Shall make an immortality of tears,
And Italy shall hail him as the Chief
Of Poet-lovers, and his higher song
Of Freedom wreathe him with as green a leaf.
But in a farther age shall rise along
The banks of Po two greater still than he;
The world which smiled on him shall do them wrong
Till they are ashes and repose with me.
The first will make an epoch with his lyre,
And fill the earth with feats of chivalry:
His fancy like a rainbow, and his fire,
Like that of Heaven, immortal, and his thought
Borne onward with a wing that cannot tire:
Pleasure shall, like a butterfly new caught,
Flutter her lovely pinions o'er his theme,
And Art itself seem into Nature wrought
By the transparency of his bright dream.
The second, of a tenderer, sadder mood,
Shall pour his soul out o'er Jerusalem.
He, too, shall sing of arms and Christian blood
Shed where Christ bled for man; and his high harp
Shall, by the willow over Jordan's flood,
Revive a song of Sion: and the sharp
Conflict, and final triumph of the brave
And pious, and the strife of hell to warp
Their hearts from their great purpose, until wave
The red-cross banners where the first red Cross
Was crimson'd from his veins who died to save,—
Shall be his sacred argument. The loss
Of years, of favour, freedom, even of fame
Contested for a time, while the smooth gloss
Of courts would slide o'er his forgotten name,
And call captivity a kindness meant
To shield him from insanity or shame,—
Such shall be his meet guerdon who was sent
To be Christ's Laureate — they reward him well!
Florence dooms me but death or banishment,
Ferrara him a pittance and a cell,
Harder to bear and less deserved, for I
Had stung the factions which I strove to quell;
But this meek man, who with a lover's eye
Will look on earth and heaven, and who will deign
To embalm with his celestial flattery
As poor a thing as e'er was spawn'd to reign,
What will *he* do to merit such a doom?
Perhaps he 'll *love*, — and is not love in vain
Torture enough without a living tomb?
Yet it will be so; he and his compeer,
The Bard of Chivalry, will both consume
In penury and pain too many a year,
And, dying in despondency, bequeath
To the kind world, which scarce will yield a tear,
A heritage enriching all who breathe
With the wealth of a genuine poet's soul,
And to their country a redoubled wreath
Unmatch'd by time (not Hellas can unroll
Through her olympiads two such names, though one
Of hers be mighty);— and is this the whole
Of such men's destiny beneath the sun?
Must all the finer thoughts, the thrilling sense,
The electric blood with which their arteries run,
Their body's self turn'd soul with the intense
Feeling of that which is, and fancy of
That which should be, to such a recompense
Conduct? shall their bright plumage on the rough
Storm be still scatter'd? Yes, and it must be;

For, form'd of far too penetrable stuff,
These birds of Paradise but long to flee
Back to their native mansion: soon they find
Earth's mist with their pure pinions not agree,
And die or are degraded: for the mind
Succumbs to long infection and despair;
And vulture passions flying close behind,
Await the moment to assail and tear;
And when at length the wingèd wanderers stoop,
Then is the prey-birds' triumph, then they share
The spoil, o'erpower'd at length by one fell swoop.
Yet some have been untouch'd who learn'd to bear,
Some whom no power could ever force to droop,
Who could resist themselves even, hardest care
And task most hopeless; but some such have been,
And if my name amongst the number were,
That destiny austere, and yet serene,
Were prouder than more dazzling fame unbless'd;—
The Alp's snow summit nearer heaven is seen
Than the volcano's fierce eruptive crest
Whose splendour from the black abyss is flung,
While the scorch'd mountain, from whose burning breast
A temporary torturing flame is wrung,
Shines for a night of terror, then repels
Its fire back to the hell from whence it sprung,
The hell which in its entrails ever dwells.

CANTO THE FOURTH

Many are poets who have never penn'd
Their inspiration, and perchance the best:
They felt, and loved, and died, but would not lend
Their thoughts to meaner beings; they compress'd
The god within them, and rejoin'd the stars
Unlaurell'd upon earth, but far more bless'd
Than those who are degraded by the jars
Of passion, and their frailties link'd to fame,
Conquerors of high renown but full of scars.
Many are poets but without the name,
For what is poesy but to create
From overfeeling good or ill; and aim
At an external life beyond our fate,
And be the new Prometheus of new men,
Bestowing fire from heaven, and then, too late,
Finding the pleasure given repaid with pain
And vultures to the heart of the bestower,
Who, having lavish'd his high gift in vain,
Lies chain'd to his lone rock by the sea-shore?
So be it: we can bear.—But thus all they
Whose intellect is an o'ermastering power
Which still recoils from its encumbering clay
Or lightens it to spirit, whatsoe'er
The form which their creations may essay,
Are bards; the kindled marble's bust may wear
More poesy upon its speaking brow
Than aught less than the Homeric page may bear.
One noble stroke with a whole life may glow,
Or deify the canvass till it shine
With beauty so surpassing all below,
That they who kneel to idols so divine
Break no commandment, for high heaven is there
Transfused, transfigurated; and the line
Of poesy, which peoples but the air
With thought and beings of our thought reflected,
Can do no more. Then let the artist share
The palm, he shares the peril, and dejected
Faints o'er the labour unapproved—Alas!
Despair and Genius are too oft connected.
Within the ages which before me pass
Art shall resume and equal even the sway
Which with Apelles and old Phidias
She held in Hellas' unforgotten day.
Ye shall be taught by Ruin to revive

The Grecian forms at least from their decay;
And Roman souls at last again shall live
In Roman works wrought by Italian hands;
And temples, loftier than the old temples, give
New wonders to the world; and while still stands
The austere Pantheon, into heaven shall soar
A dome, its image, while the base expands
Into a fane surpassing all before,
Such as all flesh shall flock to kneel in: ne'er
Such sight hath been unfolded by a door
As this, to which all nations shall repair,
And lay their sins at this huge gate of heaven.
And the bold Architect unto whose care
The daring charge to raise it shall be given,
Whom all arts shall acknowledge as their lord,
Whether into the marble chaos driven
His chisel bid the Hebrew, at whose word
Israel left Egypt, stop the waves in stone,
Or hues of Hell be by his pencil pour'd
Over the damn'd before the Judgment-throne,
Such as I saw them, such as all shall see,
Or fanes be built of grandeur yet unknown,—
The stream of his great thoughts shall spring from me,
The Ghibelline, who traversed the three realms
Which form the empire of eternity.
Amidst the clash of swords and clang of helms,
The age which I anticipate, no less
Shall be the Age of Beauty; and while whelms
Calamity the nations with distress,
The genius of my country shall arise,
A cedar towering o'er the Wilderness,
Lovely in all its branches to all eyes,
Fragrant as fair, and recognised afar,
Wafting its native incense through the skies.
Sovereigns shall pause amidst their sport of war,
Wean'd for an hour from blood, to turn and gaze
On canvass or on stone; and they who mar
All beauty upon earth, compell'd to praise,
Shall feel the power of that which they destroy;
And Art's mistaken gratitude shall raise
To tyrants who but take her for a toy
Emblems and monuments, and prostitute
Her charms to pontiffs proud, who but employ
The man of genius as the meanest brute
To bear a burthen and to serve a need,
To sell his labours and his soul to boot.
Who toils for nations may be poor indeed,
But free; who sweats for monarchs is no more
Than the gilt chamberlain, who, clothed and fee'd,
Stands sleek and slavish, bowing at his door.
Oh, Power that rulest and inspirest! how
Is it that they on earth, whose earthly power
Is likest thine in heaven in outward show,
Least like to thee in attributes divine,
Tread on the universal necks that bow,
And then assure us that their rights are thine?
And how is it that they, the sons of fame,
Whose inspiration seems to them to shine
From high, they whom the nations oftest name,
Must pass their days in penury or pain,
Or step to grandeur through the paths of shame,
And wear a deeper brand and gaudier chain?
Or if their destiny be born aloof
From lowliness, or tempted thence in vain,
In their own souls sustain a harder proof,
The inner war of passions deep and fierce?
Florence! when thy harsh sentence razed my roof,
I loved thee; but the vengeance of my verse,
The hate of injuries which every year
Makes greater, and accumulates my curse,
Shall live, outliving all thou holdest dear—
Thy pride, thy wealth, thy freedom, and even *that*,
The most infernal of all evils here,
The sway of petty tyrants in a state;
For such sway is not limited to kings,

And demagogues yield to them but in date,
As swept off sooner; in all deadly things
Which make men hate themselves and one another,
In discord, cowardice, cruelty, all that springs
From Death the Sin-born's incest with his mother,
In rank oppression in its rudest shape,
The faction Chief is but the Sultan's brother,
And the worst despot's far less human ape:—
Florence! when this lone spirit, which so long
Yearn'd, as the captive toiling at escape,
To fly back to thee in despite of wrong,
An exile, saddest of all prisoners,
Who has the whole world for a dungeon strong,
Seas, mountains, and the horizon's verge for bars,
Which shut him from the sole small spot of earth
Where — whatsoe'er his fate — he still were hers,
His country's, and might die where he had birth —
Florence! when this lone spirit shall return
To kindred spirits, thou wilt feel my worth,
And seek to honour with an empty urn
The ashes thou shalt ne'er obtain — Alas!
'What have I done to thee, my people?' Stern
Are all thy dealings, but in this they pass
The limits of man's common malice, for
All that a citizen could be I was;
Raised by thy will, all thine in peace or war,
And for this thou hast warr'd with me. — 'T is done:
I may not overleap the eternal bar
Built up between us, and will die alone,
Beholding with the dark eye of a seer
The evil days to gifted souls foreshown,
Foretelling them to those who will not hear,
As in the old time, till the hour be come
When Truth shall strike their eyes through many a tear,
And make them own the Prophet in his tomb.

THE MORGANTE MAGGIORE

OF PULCI

ADVERTISEMENT

The *Morgante Maggiore*, of the first canto of which this translation is offered, divides with the *Orlando Innamorato* the honour of having formed and suggested the style and story of Ariosto. The great defects of Boiardo were his treating too seriously the narratives of chivalry, and his harsh style. Ariosto, in his continuation, by a judicious mixture of the gaiety of Pulci, has avoided the one; and Berni, in his reformation of Boiardo's poem, has corrected the other. Pulci may be considered as the precursor and model of Berni altogether, as he has partly been to Ariosto, however inferior to both his copyists. He is no less the founder of a new style of poetry very lately sprung up in England. I allude to that of the ingenious Whistlecraft. The serious poems on Roncesvalles in the same language, and more particularly the excellent one of Mr. Merivale, are to be traced to the same source. It has never yet been decided entirely whether Pulci's intention was or was not to deride the religion which is one of his favourite topics. It appears to me, that such an intention would have been no less hazardous to the poet than to the priest, particularly in that age and country; and the permission to publish the poem, and its reception among the classics of Italy, prove that it neither was nor is so interpreted. That he intended to ridicule the monastic life, and suffered his imagination to play with the simple dulness of his converted giant, seems evident enough; but surely it were as unjust to accuse him of irreligion on this account, as to denounce Fielding for his Parson Adams, Barnabas, Thwackum, Supple, and the Ordinary in *Jonathan Wild*, — or Scott, for the exquisite use of his Covenanters in the *Tales of my Landlord*.

In the following translation I have used the liberty of the original with the proper names; as Pulci uses Gan, Ganellon, or Ganellone; Carlo, Carlomagno, or Carlomano; Rondel, or Rondello, etc., as it suits his convenience; so has the translator. In other respects the version is faithful to the best of the translator's ability in combining his interpretation of the one language with the not very easy task of reducing it to the same versification in the other. The reader, on comparing it with the original, is requested to remember that the antiquated language of Pulci, however pure, is not easy to the generality of Italians themselves, from its great mixture of Tuscan proverbs; and he may therefore be more indulgent to the present attempt. How far the translator has succeeded, and whether or no he shall continue the work, are questions which the public will decide. He was induced to make the experiment partly by his love for, and partial intercourse with, the Italian language, of which it is so easy to acquire a slight knowledge, and with which it is so nearly impossible for a foreigner to become accurately conversant. The Italian language is like a capricious beauty, who accords her smiles to all, her favours to few, and sometimes least to those who have courted her longest. The translator wished also to present in an English dress a part at least of a poem never yet rendered into a northern language; at the same time that it has been the original of some of the most celebrated productions on this side of the Alps, as well as of those recent experiments in poetry in England which have been already mentioned.

CANTO THE FIRST

I

In the beginning was the Word next God;
God was the Word, the Word no less was he:
This was in the beginning, to my mode
Of thinking, and without him nought could be:
Therefore, just Lord! from out thy high abode,
Benign and pious, bid an angel flee,
One only, to be my companion, who
Shall help my famous, worthy, old song through.

II

And thou, oh Virgin! daughter, mother, bride,
Of the same Lord, who gave to you each key
Of heaven and hell and every thing beside,
The day thy Gabriel said 'All hail!' to thee,
Since to thy servants pity 's ne'er denied,
With flowing rhymes, a pleasant style and free,
Be to my verses then benignly kind,
And to the end illuminate my mind.

III

'T was in the season when sad Philomel
Weeps with her sister, who remembers and
Deplores the ancient woes which both befell,
And makes the nymphs enamour'd, to the hand
Of Phaeton by Phœbus loved so well
His car (but temper'd by his sire's command)
Was given, and on the horizon's verge just now
Appear'd, so that Tithonus scratch'd his brow:

IV

When I prepared my bark first to obey,
As it should still obey, the helm, my mind,
And carry prose or rhyme, and this my lay
Of Charles the Emperor, whom you will find
By several pens already praised; but they
Who to diffuse his glory were inclined,
For all that I can see, in prose or verse,
Have understood Charles badly, and wrote worse.

V

Leonardo Aretino said already,
That if, like Pepin, Charles had had a writer
Of genius quick, and diligently steady,
No hero would in history look brighter;
He in the cabinet being always ready,
And in the field a most victorious fighter,
Who for the church and Christian faith had wrought,
Certes, far more than yet is said or thought.

VI

You still may see at Saint Liberatore
The abbey, no great way from Manopell,
Erected in the Abruzzi to his glory,
Because of the great battle in which fell
A pagan king, according to the story,
And felon people whom Charles sent to hell:
And there are bones so many, and so many,
Near them Giusaffa's would seem few, if any.

VII

But the world, blind and ignorant, don't prize
His virtues as I wish to see them: thou.

Florence, by his great bounty dost arise,
And hast, and may'st have, if thou wilt allow,
All proper customs and true courtesies:
Whate'er thou hast acquired from then till now,
With knightly courage, treasure, or the lance,
Is sprung from out the noble blood of France.

VIII

Twelve paladins had Charles in court, of whom
The wisest and most famous was Orlando;
Him traitor Gan conducted to the tomb
In Roncesvalles, as the villain plann'd too,
While the horn rang so loud and knell'd the doom
Of their sad rout, though he did all knight can do;
And Dante in his comedy has given
To him a happy seat with Charles in heaven.

IX

'T was Christmas-day; in Paris all his court
Charles held; the chief, I say, Orlando was,
The Dane; Astolfo there too did resort,
Also Ansuigi, the gay time to pass
In festival and in triumphal sport,
The much-renown'd St. Dennis being the cause;
Angiolin of Bayonne, and Oliver,
And gentle Belinghieri too came there:

X

Avolio, and Arino, and Othone
Of Normandy, and Richard Paladin,
Wise Hamo, and the ancient Salamone,
Walter of Lion's Mount, and Baldovin,
Who was the son of the sad Ganellone,
Were there, exciting too much gladness in
The son of Pepin: — when his knights came hither,
He groan'd with joy to see them altogether.

XI

But watchful Fortune, lurking, takes good heed
Ever some bar 'gainst our intents to bring:
While Charles reposed him thus, in word and deed,
Orlando ruled court, Charles, and every thing;
Curst Gan, with envy bursting, had such need
To vent his spite, that thus with Charles the king
One day he openly began to say,
'Orlando must we always then obey?

XII

'A thousand times I've been about to say,
Orlando too presumptuously goes on;
Here are we, counts, kings, dukes, to own thy sway,
Hamo, and Otho, Ogier, Solomon,
Each have to honour thee and to obey;
But he has too much credit near the throne,
Which we won't suffer, but are quite decided
By such a boy to be no longer guided.

XIII

'And even at Aspramont thou didst begin
To let him know he was a gallant knight,
And by the fount did much the day to win;
But I know *who* that day had won the fight
If it had not for good Gherardo been:
The victory was Almonte's else; his sight
He kept upon the standard, and the laurels
In fact and fairness are his earning, Charles.

XIV

'If thou rememberest being in Gascony,
When there advanced the nations out of Spain,
The Christian cause had suffer'd shamefully,
Had not his valour driven them back again.
Best speak the truth when there 's a reason why:
Know then, oh emperor! that all complain:
As for myself, I shall repass the mounts
O'er which I cross'd with two and sixty counts.

XV

''T is fit thy grandeur should dispense relief,
So that each here may have his proper part,

For the whole court is more or less in grief:
Perhaps thou deem'st this lad a Mars in heart?'
Orlando one day heard this speech in brief,
As by himself it chanced he sate apart:
Displeased he was with Gan because he said it,
But much more still that Charles should give him credit.

XVI

And with the sword he would have murder'd Gan,
But Oliver thrust in between the pair,
And from his hand extracted Durlindan,
And thus at length they separated were.
Orlando, angry too with Carloman,
Wanted but little to have slain him there;
Then forth alone from Paris went the chief,
And burst and madden'd with disdain and grief.

XVII

From Ermellina, consort of the Dane,
He took Cortana, and then took Rondell,
And on towards Brara prick'd him o'er the plain;
And when she saw him coming, Aldabelle
Stretch'd forth her arms to clasp her lord again:
Orlando, in whose brain all was not well,
As 'Welcome, my Orlando, home,' she said,
Raised up his sword to smite her on the head.

XVIII

Like him a fury counsels, his revenge
On Gan in that rash act he seem'd to take,
Which Aldabella thought extremely strange;
But soon Orlando found himself awake;
And his spouse took his bridle on this change,
And he dismounted from his horse, and spake
Of every thing which pass'd without demur,
And then reposed himself some days with her.

XIX

Then full of wrath departed from the place,
And far as pagan countries roam'd astray,
And while he rode, yet still at every pace
The traitor Gan remember'd by the way;
And wandering on in error a long space,
An abbey which in a lone desert lay,
'Midst glens obscure and distant lands, he found,
Which form'd the Christian's and the pagan's bound.

XX

The abbot was call'd Clermont, and by blood
Descended from Angrante: under cover
Of a great mountain's brow the abbey stood,
But certain savage giants look'd him over;
One Passamont was foremost of the brood,
And Alabaster and Morgante hover
Second and third, with certain slings, and throw
In daily jeopardy the place below.

XXI

The monks could pass the convent gate no more,
Nor leave their cells for water or for wood;
Orlando knock'd, but none would ope, before
Unto the prior it at length seem'd good;
Enter'd, he said that he was taught to adore
Him who was born of Mary's holiest blood,
And was baptized a Christian; and then show'd
How to the abbey he had found his road.

XXII

Said the abbot, 'You are welcome; what is mine
We give you freely, since that you believe
With us in Mary Mother's Son divine;
And that you may not, cavalier, conceive
The cause of our delay to let you in
To be rusticity, you shall receive
The reason why our gate was barr'd to you:
Thus those who in suspicion live must do.

XXIII

'When hither to inhabit first we came
These mountains, albeit that they are obscure,

As you perceive, yet without fear or blame
They seem'd to promise an asylum sure:
From savage brutes alone, too fierce to tame,
'T was fit our quiet dwelling to secure;
But now, if here we 'd stay, we needs must guard
Against domestic beasts with watch and ward.

XXIV

'These make us stand, in fact, upon the watch;
For late there have appear'd three giants rough;
What nation or what kingdom bore the batch
I know not, but they are all of savage stuff;
When force and malice with some genius match,
You know, they can do all — *we* are not enough:
And these so much our orisons derange,
I know not what to do, till matters change.

XXV

'Our ancient fathers living the desert in,
For just and holy works were duly fed;
Think not they lived on locusts sole, 't is certain
That manna was rain'd down from heaven instead;
But here 't is fit we keep on the alert in
Our bounds, or taste the stones shower'd down for bread
From off yon mountain daily raining faster,
And flung by Passamont and Alabaster.

XXVI

'The third, Morgante, 's savagest by far; he
Plucks up pines, beeches, poplar-trees, and oaks,
And flings them, our community to bury;
And all that I can do but more provokes.'
While thus they parley in the cemetery,
A stone from one of their gigantic strokes,
Which nearly crush'd Rondell, came tumbling over,
So that he took a long leap under cover.

XXVII

'For God-sake, cavalier, come in with speed;
The manna 's falling now,' the abbot cried. —
'This fellow does not wish my horse should feed,
Dear abbot,' Roland unto him replied.
'Of restiveness he 'd cure him had he need;
That stone seems with good will and aim applied.'
The holy father said, 'I don't deceive;
They 'll one day fling the mountain, I believe.'

XXVIII

Orlando bade them take care of Rondello,
And also made a breakfast of his own:
'Abbot,' he said, 'I want to find that fellow
Who flung at my good horse yon corner-stone.'
Said the abbot, 'Let not my advice seem shallow;
As to a brother dear I speak alone;
I would dissuade you, baron, from this strife,
As knowing sure that you will lose your life.

XXIX

'That Passamont has in his hand three darts —
Such slings, clubs, ballast-stones, that yield you must;
You know that giants have much stouter hearts
Than us, with reason, in proportion just:
If go you will, guard well against their arts,
For these are very barbarous and robust.'
Orlando answer'd, 'This I 'll see, be sure,
And walk the wild on foot to be secure.'

XXX

The abbot sign'd the great cross on his front,
'Then go you with God's benison and mine.'
Orlando, after he had scaled the mount,
As the abbot had directed, kept the line
Right to the usual haunt of Passamont;
Who, seeing him alone in this design,
Survey'd him fore and aft with eyes observant,
Then ask'd him, 'If he wish'd to stay as servant?'

XXXI

And promised him an office of great ease.
But said Orlando, 'Saracen insane!
I come to kill you, if it shall so please
God, not to serve as footboy in your train;
You with his monks so oft have broke the peace —
Vile dog! 'tis past his patience to sustain.'
The giant ran to fetch his arms, quite furious,
When he received an answer so injurious.

XXXII

And being return'd to where Orlando stood,
Who had not moved him from the spot, and swinging
The cord, he hurl'd a stone with strength so rude,
As show'd a sample of his skill in slinging;
It roll'd on Count Orlando's helmet good
And head, and set both head and helmet ringing,
So that he swoon'd with pain as if he died,
But more than dead, he seem'd so stupefied.

XXXIII

Then Passamont, who thought him slain outright,
Said, 'I will go, and while he lies along,
Disarm me: why such craven did I fight?'
But Christ his servants ne'er abandons long,
Especially Orlando, such a knight
As to desert would almost be a wrong.
While the giant goes to put off his defences,
Orlando has recall'd his force and senses:

XXXIV

And loud he shouted, 'Giant, where dost go?
Thou thought'st me doubtless for the bier outlaid;
To the right about — without wings thou 'rt too slow
To fly my vengeance — currish renegade!
'T was but by treachery thou laid'st me low.'
The giant his astonishment betray'd
And turn'd about, and stopp'd his journey on,
And then he stoop'd to pick up a great stone.

XXXV

Orlando had Cortana bare in hand;
To split the head in twain was what he schemed: —
Cortana clave the skull like a true brand,
And pagan Passamont died unredeem'd;
Yet, harsh and haughty, as he lay he bann'd,
And most devoutly Macon still blasphemed;
But while his crude, rude blasphemies he heard,
Orlando thank'd the Father and the Word, —

XXXVI

Saying, 'What grace to me thou 'st this day given!
And I to thee, oh Lord! am ever bound;
I know my life was saved by thee from heaven,
Since by the giant I was fairly down'd.
All things by thee are measured just and even;
Our power without thine aid would nought be found;
I pray thee take heed of me, till I can
At least return once more to Carloman.'

XXXVII

And having said thus much, he went his way;
And Alabaster he found out below,
Doing the very best that in him lay
To root from out a bank a rock or two.
Orlando, when he reach'd him, loud 'gan say,
'How think'st thou, glutton, such a stone to throw?'
When Alabaster heard his deep voice ring,
He suddenly betook him to his sling,

XXXVIII

And hurl'd a fragment of a size so large,
That if it had in fact fulfill'd its mission,
And Roland not avail'd him of his targe,
There would have been no need of a physician.
Orlando set himself in turn to charge,
And in his bulky bosom made incision
With all his sword. The lout fell; but o'erthrown, he
However by no means forgot Macone.

XXXIX

Morgante had a palace in his mode,
Composed of branches, logs of wood, and earth,
And stretch'd himself at ease in this abode,
And shut himself at night within his berth.

Orlando knock'd and knock'd again, to goad
The giant from his sleep; and he came forth
The door to open, like a crazy thing,
For a rough dream had shook him slumbering.

XL

He thought that a fierce serpent had attack'd him;
And Mahomet he call'd; but Mahomet
Is nothing worth, and not an instant back'd him;
But praying blessed Jesu, he was set
At liberty from all the fears which rack'd him;
And to the gate he came with great regret —
'Who knocks here?' grumbling all the while, said he.
'That,' said Orlando, 'you will quickly see.

XLI

'I come to preach to you, as to your brothers,
Sent by the miserable monks — repentance;
For Providence divine, in you and others,
Condemns the evil done my new acquaintance.
'T is writ on high — your wrong must pay another's;
From heaven itself is issued out this sentence.
Know then, that colder now than a pilaster
I left your Passamont and Alabaster.'

XLII

Morgante said, 'Oh gentle cavalier!
Now by thy God say me no villany;
The favour of your name I fain would hear,
And if a Christian, speak for courtesy.'
Replied Orlando, 'So much to your ear
I by my faith disclose contentedly;
Christ I adore, who is the genuine Lord,
And, if you please, by you may be adored.'

XLIII

The Saracen rejoin'd in humble tone,
'I have had an extraordinary vision;
A savage serpent fell on me alone,
And Macon would not pity my condition;
Hence to thy God, who for ye did atone
Upon the cross, preferr'd I my petition;
His timely succour set me safe and free,
And I a Christian am disposed to be.'

XLIV

Orlando answer'd, 'Baron just and pious,
If this good wish your heart can really move,
To the true God, who will not then deny us
Eternal honour, you will go above;
And, if you please, as friends we will ally us,
And I will love you with a perfect love.
Your idols are vain liars, full of fraud:
The only true God is the Christian's God.

XLV

'The Lord descended to the virgin breast
Of Mary Mother, sinless and divine;
If you acknowledge the Redeemer blest
Without whom neither sun nor star can shine,
Abjure bad Macon's false and felon test,
Your renegado god, and worship mine, —
Baptize yourself with zeal, since you repent.'
To which Morgante answer'd, 'I 'm content.'

XLVI

And then Orlando to embrace him flew,
And made much of his convert, as he cried,
'To the abbey I will gladly marshal you.'
To whom Morgante, 'Let us go,' replied;
'I to the friars have for peace to sue.'
Which thing Orlando heard with inward pride,
Saying, 'My brother, so devout and good,
Ask the abbot pardon, as I wish you would.

XLVII

'Since God has granted your illumination,
Accepting you in mercy for his own,
Humility should be your first oblation.'
Morgante said, 'For goodness' sake, make known —
Since that your God is to be mine — your station,
And let your name in verity be shown;
Then will I every thing at your command do.'
On which the other said he was Orlando.

XLVIII

'Then,' quoth the giant, 'blessed be Jesu
A thousand times with gratitude and praise !
Oft, perfect baron ! have I heard of you
Through all the different periods of my days:
And, as I said, to be your vassal too
I wish for your great gallantry always.'
Thus reasoning, they continued much to say
And onwards to the abbey went their way.

XLIX

And by the way about the giants dead
Orlando with Morgante reason'd: 'Be,
For their decease, I pray you, comforted;
And, since it is God's pleasure, pardon me;
A thousand wrongs unto the monks they bred,
And our true Scripture soundeth openly,
Good is rewarded, and chastised the ill,
Which the Lord never faileth to fulfil.

L

'Because his love of justice unto all
Is such, he wills his judgment should devour
All who have sin, however great or small;
But good he well remembers to restore.
Nor without justice holy could we call
Him, whom I now require you to adore.
All men must make his will their wishes sway,
And quickly and spontaneously obey.

LI

'And here our doctors are of one accord,
Coming on this point to the same conclusion, —
That in their thoughts who praise in heaven the Lord
If pity e'er was guilty of intrusion
For their unfortunate relations stored
In hell below, and damn'd in great confusion, —
Their happiness would be reduced to nought,
And thus unjust the Almighty's self be thought.

LII

'But they in Christ have firmest hope, and all
Which seems to him, to them too must appear
Well done; nor could it otherwise befall:
He never can in any purpose err.
If sire or mother suffer endless thrall,
They don't disturb themselves for him or her;
What pleases God to them must joy inspire; —
Such is the observance of the eternal choir.'

LIII

'A word unto the wise,' Morgante said,
'Is wont to be enough, and you shall see
How much I grieve about my brethren dead;
And if the will of God seem good to me,
Just as you tell me 't is in heaven obey'd —
Ashes to ashes, — merry let us be !
I will cut off the hands from both their trunks,
And carry them unto the holy monks,

LIV

'So that all persons may be sure and certain
That they are dead, and have no further fear
To wander solitary this desert in,
And that they may perceive my spirit clear
By the Lord's grace, who hath withdrawn the curtain
Of darkness, making his bright realm appear.'
He cut his brethren's hands off at these words,
And left them to the savage beasts and birds.

LV

Then to the abbey they went on together,
Where waited them the abbot in great doubt.
The monks, who knew not yet the fact, ran thither
To their superior, all in breathless rout,
Saying with tremor, 'Please to tell us whether
You wish to have this person in or out ?'
The abbot, looking through upon the giant,
Too greatly fear'd, at first, to be compliant.

LVI

Orlando, seeing him thus agitated,
Said quickly, 'Abbot, be thou of good cheer;

He Christ believes as Christian must be rated,
And hath renounced his Macon false;' which here
Morgante with the hands corroborated,
A proof of both the giants' fate quite clear:
Thence, with due thanks, the abbot God adored,
Saying, 'Thou hast contented me, oh Lord!'

LVII

He gazed; Morgante's height he calculated,
And more than once contemplated his size;
And then he said, 'Oh giant celebrated!
Know, that no more my wonder will arise,
How you could tear and fling the trees you late did,
When I behold your form with my own eyes.
You now a true and perfect friend will show
Yourself to Christ, as once you were a foe.

LVIII

'And one of our apostles, Saul once named,
Long persecuted sore the faith of Christ,
Till, one day, by the Spirit being inflamed,
"Why dost thou persecute me thus?" said Christ;
And then from his offence he was reclaim'd,
And went for ever after preaching Christ,
And of the faith became a trump, whose sounding
O'er the whole earth is echoing and rebounding.

LIX

'So, my Morgante, you may do likewise;
He who repents — thus writes the Evangelist —
Occasions more rejoicing in the skies
Than ninety-nine of the celestial list.
You may be sure, should each desire arise
With just zeal for the Lord, that you'll exist
Among the happy saints for evermore;
But you were lost and damn'd to hell before!'

LX

And thus great honour to Morgante paid
The abbot: many days they did repose.
One day, as with Orlando they both stray'd,
And saunter'd here and there, where'er they chose,
The abbot show'd a chamber, where array'd
Much armour was, and hung up certain bows;
And one of these Morgante for a whim
Girt on, though useless, he believed, to him.

LXI

There being a want of water in the place,
Orlando, like a worthy brother, said,
'Morgante, I could wish you in this case
To go for water.' — 'You shall be obey'd
In all commands,' was the reply, 'straightways.'
Upon his shoulder a great tub he laid,
And went out on his way unto a fountain,
Where he was wont to drink below the mountain.

LXII

Arrived there, a prodigious noise he hears,
Which suddenly along the forest spread;
Whereat from out his quiver he prepares
An arrow for his bow, and lifts his head;
And lo! a monstrous herd of swine appears,
And onward rushes with tempestuous tread,
And to the fountain's brink precisely pours;
So that the giant 's join'd by all the boars.

LXIII

Morgante at a venture shot an arrow,
Which pierced a pig precisely in the ear,
And pass'd unto the other side quite thorough;
So that the boar, defunct, lay tripp'd up near.
Another, to revenge his fellow farrow,
Against the giant rush'd in fierce career,
And reach'd the passage with so swift a foot,
Morgante was not now in time to shoot.

LXIV

Perceiving that the pig was on him close,
He gave him such a punch upon the head,
As floor'd him so that he no more arose,
Smashing the very bone; and he fell dead
Next to the other. Having seen such blows,
The other pigs along the valley fled;
Morgante on his neck the bucket took,
Full from the spring, which neither swerved nor shook.

LXV

The ton was on one shoulder, and there were
The hogs on t' other, and he brush'd apace

On to the abbey, though by no means near,
Nor spilt one drop of water in his race.
Orlando, seeing him so soon appear
With the dead boars and with that brimful vase,
Marvell'd to see his strength so very great;
So did the abbot, and set wide the gate.

LXVI

The monks, who saw the water fresh and good,
Rejoiced, but much more to perceive the pork;—
All animals are glad at sight of food:
They lay their breviaries to sleep, and work
With greedy pleasure and in such a mood
That the flesh needs no salt beneath their fork.
Of rankness and of rot there is no fear,
For all the fasts are now left in arrear.

LXVII

As though they wish'd to burst at once, they ate;
And gorged so that, as if the bones had been
In water, sorely grieved the dog and cat,
Perceiving that they all were pick'd too clean.
The abbot, who to all did honour great,
A few days after this convivial scene,
Gave to Morgante a fine horse, well train'd,
Which he long time had for himself maintain'd.

LXVIII

The horse Morgante to a meadow led
To gallop and to put him to the proof,
Thinking that he a back of iron had,
Or to skim eggs unbroke was light enough;
But the horse, sinking with the pain, fell dead,
And burst, while cold on earth lay head and hoof.
Morgante said, 'Get up, thou sulky cur!'
And still continued pricking with the spur.

LXIX

But finally he thought fit to dismount,
And said, 'I am as light as any feather,
And he has burst;—to this what say you, count?'
Orlando answer'd, 'Like a ship's mast rather
You seem to me, and with the truck for front;—
Let him go; Fortune wills that we together
Should march, but you on foot, Morgante, still.'
To which the giant answered, 'So I will.

LXX

'When there shall be occasion, you will see
How I approve my courage in the fight.'
Orlando said, 'I really think you 'll be,
If it should prove God's will, a goodly knight;
Nor will you napping there discover me.
But never mind your horse, though out of sight
'T were best to carry him into some wood,
If but the means or way I understood.'

LXXI

The giant said, 'Then carry him I will,
Since that to carry me he was so slack—
To render, as the gods do, good for ill;
But lend a hand to place him on my back.'
Orlando answer'd, 'If my counsel still
May weigh, Morgante, do not undertake
To lift or carry this dead courser, who,
As you have done to him, will do to you.

LXXII

'Take care he don't revenge himself, though dead,
As Nessus did of old beyond all cure.
I don't know if the fact you've heard or read;
But he will make you burst, you may be sure.'—
'But help him on my back,' Morgante said,
'And you shall see what weight I can endure.
In place, my gentle Roland, of this palfrey,
With all the bells I 'd carry yonder belfry.'

LXXIII

The abbot said, 'The steeple may do well,
But, for the bells, you 've broken them, I wot.'
Morgante answer'd, 'Let them pay in hell
The penalty who lie dead in yon grot;'
And hoisting up the horse from where he fell,
He said, 'Now look if I the gout have got,

Orlando, in the legs — or if I have force;' —
And then he made two gambols with the horse.

LXXIV

Morgante was like any mountain framed;
So if he did this, 't is no prodigy;
But secretly himself Orlando blamed,
Because he was one of his family;
And fearing that he might be hurt or maim'd,
Once more he bade him lay his burden by:
'Put down, nor bear him further the desert in.'
Morgante said, 'I 'll carry him for certain.'

LXXV

He did; and stow'd him in some nook away,
And to the abbey then return'd with speed.
Orlando said, 'Why longer do we stay?
Morgante, here is nought to do indeed.'
The abbot by the hand he took one day,
And said, with great respect, he had agreed
To leave his reverence; but for this decision
He wish'd to have his pardon and permission.

LXXVI

The honours they continued to receive
Perhaps exceeded what his merits claim'd:
He said, 'I mean, and quickly, to retrieve
The lost days of time past, which may be blamed;
Some days ago I should have ask'd your leave,
Kind father, but I really was ashamed,
And know not how to show my sentiment,
So much I see you with our stay content.

LXXVII

'But in my heart I bear through every clime
The abbot, abbey, and this solitude —
So much I love you in so short a time;
For me, from heaven reward you with all good
The God so true, the eternal Lord sublime,
Whose kingdom at the last hath open stood.
Meantime we stand expectant of your blessing,
And recommend us to your prayers with pressing.'

LXXVIII

Now when the abbot Count Orlando heard,
His heart grew soft with inner tenderness,
Such fervour in his bosom bred each word;
And, 'Cavalier,' he said, 'if I have less
Courteous and kind to your great worth appear'd
Than fits me for such gentle blood to express,
I know I have done too little in this case;
But blame our ignorance and this poor place.

LXXIX

'We can indeed but honour you with masses,
And sermons, thanksgivings, and paternosters,
Hot suppers, dinners (fitting other places
In verity much rather than the cloisters);
But such a love for you my heart embraces
For thousand virtues which your bosom fosters,
That wheresoe'er you go I too shall be,
And, on the other part, you rest with me.

LXXX

'This may involve a seeming contradiction;
But you I know are sage, and feel, and taste,
And understand my speech with full conviction.
For your just pious deeds may you be graced
With the Lord's great reward and benediction,
By whom you were directed to this waste:
To his high mercy is our freedom due,
For which we render thanks to him and you.

LXXXI

'You saved at once our life and soul: such fear
The giants caused us, that the way was lost
By which we could pursue a fit career
In search of Jesus and the saintly host;
And your departure breeds such sorrow here
That comfortless we all are to our cost;
But months and years you would not stay in sloth,
Nor are you form'd to wear our sober cloth;

LXXXII

'But to bear arms and wield the lance; indeed,
With these as much is done as with this cowl;
In proof of which the Scripture you may read.
This giant up to heaven may bear his soul
By your compassion: now in peace proceed.
Your state and name I seek not to unroll;
But, if I'm asked, this answer shall be given,
That here an angel was sent down from heaven.

LXXXIII

'If you want armour or aught else, go in,
Look o'er the wardrobe, and take what you choose,
And cover with it o'er this giant's skin.'
Orlando answer'd, 'If there should lie loose
Some armour, ere our journey we begin,
Which might be turn'd to my companion's use,
The gift would be acceptable to me.'
The abbot said to him, 'Come in and see.'

LXXXIV

And in a certain closet, where the wall
Was cover'd with old armour like a crust,
The abbot said to them, 'I give you all.'
Morgante rummaged piecemeal from the dust
The whole, which, save one cuirass, was too small,
And that too had the mail inlaid with rust.
They wonder'd how it fitted him exactly,
Which ne'er had suited others so compactly.

LXXXV

'T was an immeasurable giant's, who
By the great Milo of Agrante fell
Before the abbey many years ago.
The story on the wall was figured well;
In the last moment of the abbey's foe,
Who long had waged a war implacable:
Precisely as the war occurr'd they drew him,
And there was Milo as he overthrew him.

LXXXVI

Seeing this history, Count Orlando said
In his own heart, 'Oh God, who in the sky
Know'st all things! how was Milo hither led?
Who caused the giant in this place to die?'
And certain letters, weeping, then he read,
So that he could not keep his visage dry,—
As I will tell in the ensuing story.
From evil keep you the high King of glory!

FRANCESCA OF RIMINI

FROM THE INFERNO OF DANTE

CANTO V [LINES 97–142]

'The land where I was born sits by the seas,
Upon that shore to which the Po descends,
With all his followers, in search of peace.
Love, which the gentle heart soon apprehends,
Seized him for the fair person which was ta'en
From me, and me even yet the mode offends.
Love, who to none beloved to love again
Remits, seized me with wish to please, so strong,
That, as thou seest, yet, yet it doth remain.
Love to one death conducted us along,
But Caina waits for him our life who ended:'
These were the accents utter'd by her tongue.—
Since I first listen'd to these souls offended,
I bow'd my visage, and so kept it till—
'What think'st thou?' said the bard; when I unbended,
And recommenced: 'Alas! unto such ill
How many sweet thoughts, what strong ecstasies,
Led these their evil fortune to fulfil!'
And then I turn'd unto their side my eyes,
And said, 'Francesca, thy sad destinies
Have made me sorrow till the tears arise.
But tell me, in the season of sweet sighs,
By what and how thy love to passion rose,
So as his dim desires to recognise?'
Then she to me: 'The greatest of all woes
Is to remind us of our happy days

In misery, and that thy teacher knows.
But if to learn our passion's first root preys
Upon thy spirit with such sympathy,
I will do even as he who weeps and says.
We read one day for pastime, seated nigh,
Of Lancilot, how love enchain'd him too.
We were alone, quite unsuspiciously.
But oft our eyes met, and our cheeks in hue
All o'er discolour'd by that reading were;
But one point only wholly us o'erthrew;
When we read the long-sigh'd-for smile of her,
To be thus kiss'd by such devoted lover,
He who from me can be divided ne'er
Kiss'd my mouth, trembling in the act all over.
Accursèd was the book and he who wrote!
That day no further leaf we did uncover.' —
While thus one spirit told us of their lot,
The other wept, so that with pity's thralls
I swoon'd as if by death I had been smote,
And fell down even as a dead body falls.

DRAMAS

[The composition of the eight Dramas extends over a period of seven years, from 1816 to 1822, making a little more than one every twelvemonth besides the large amount of other verse written. To this reckless haste in production may be ascribed many of their crudities; indeed, the more one reads in the poetry of that age, whether it be in the works of Byron or Shelley, the more one is impressed with the harm their genius suffered from the lack of critical repression. The Dramas of Byron fall naturally into two groups: *Manfred*, *Cain*, and *Heaven and Earth*, which deal with frankly supernatural themes and are the full and, in *Manfred* at least, the most perfect expression of his romantic temperament; and *Marino Faliero*, *Sardanapalus*, and *The Two Foscari*, which are an attempt to show the playwrights of the day what could be done with the materials of history while preserving the classical laws of the drama. Byron protested always that these plays of the second group were not written for the stage, but one cannot but feel that he protests too much, and that all the while in his heart he longed to see them drive the accepted drama of the day off the boards. Otherwise it is hard to see why he should have drawn the contrast so frequently between his work and the lawless plays against which he waged war. It is fair to say, however, that when news reached him of the preparations to bring out *Marino Faliero* at Drury Lane, he protested vigorously, and even went so far as to attempt to stay the proceedings by means of an injunction obtained from the Lord Chancellor. The play was nevertheless given on April 30, 1821, and on five nights in May. It failed as Byron had predicted. The two latest of the Dramas, *Werner* and *The Deformed Transformed*, belong in a way to the second group but contain romantic elements that to a certain extent mark them off by themselves. — The first two acts of *Manfred* were written during Byron's residence in Switzerland in 1816, and the third act was added in Venice. This third act was sent to England, March 9, 1817, and received such severe criticism at the hands of Gifford, Murray's adviser, that Byron practically rewrote it. The play was published June 16, 1817. Much has been said about the source of Byron's inspiration in this poem, and its resemblance to the Faust legend is patent. Byron protested that he had never read Marlowe's *Faustus*, but he had heard an oral translation of Goethe's poem at Diodati, and his *Manfred* undoubtedly contains echoes of the German work, though its tone is markedly original. Above all the spirit of the Alps, which inspired the third canto of *Childe Harold*, breathes also in this powerful drama. The project of *Marino Faliero* followed hard upon *Manfred*, and is the fruit of Byron's sympathetic study of the history of Venice. But the play for some reason was laid aside and not taken up again until the year 1820, when it was finished in three months ending July 17. He had prepared himself for the work by a careful study of Venetian annals and boasts of the literalness with which he reproduced the facts of history. For the subject of his next attempt 'to dramatize like the Greeks,' he turned from Italy to Assyria. *Sardanapalus* was begun at Ravenna, January 13, 1821, and completed by May 28. It was published in the same volume with *The Two Foscari* and *Cain*, December 19, 1821; the three plays were thus written in a single year. *The Two Foscari*, indeed, represents the same spirit of enthusiasm for the 'regular' drama; it was begun June 12, 1821, and concluded on July 12. Judging by the extracts from Daru's *Histoire de la République de Venise* and from Sismondi, published in the appendix of the first edition, it would seem that Byron relied chiefly on these two authorities for his knowledge of this incident in Venetian history. But a comparison with these writers shows that he treated the subject-matter with considerable freedom. The exact story of the Foscari, which dates back to the fifteenth century, may be found by those interested in the standard histories of Venice. The third of the plays of 1821, *Cain, a Mystery*, was begun at Ravenna, July 16, and finished September 9. The theme, with its glorification of revolt, was in many respects admirably fitted to Byron's hand, and some of the imagery is in fact sublime. Goethe praised the poem extravagantly, as did others of lesser critical note ; but to the English public at large, the blasphemy of the scenes was Satanic. It raised a storm of protest. Probably, to-day, it is chiefly of this poem we think in connection with Goethe's saying that Byron was a child when he reflected. *Heaven and Earth*, exquisite in parts but, as a whole, far below *Manfred* and *Cain* in conception and execution, occupied Byron from October 9, 1821, to about the 23d of the same month. It was to have been published with the other three dramas, but for reasons of prudence Murray held it back until the poet, incensed, demanded its restitution. It was finally printed in the *Liberator*, January 1, 1823. Two months after completing this biblical drama, December 18, 1821, he began *Werner* at Pisa, and brought it to an end in just a month and two days. It was published by Murray, November 23, 1822. In his Preface Byron names the source of the play, and tells how early the subject had fascinated his imagination. In the actual execution of the drama as we have it, there are signs of apparent fatigue, as if he had grown tired of this form of composition. As a whole it is dull reading. The last of the plays, *The Deformed Transformed* (written at Pisa some time in 1822), was also drawn from a novel, *The Three Brothers*, by Joshua Pickersgill, Jr. It was published, February 20, 1824, just before Byron's death at Missolonghi. Probably the formlessness of the thing influenced him in keeping it so long from the public ; probably, too, the manifest kinship of Byron's devil to Goethe's Mephistopheles made him fear the charge of plagiarism — and against that charge he was always extremely, almost perversely, sensitive. — If the editor's judgment may be trusted, there is a notable and almost uninterrupted decline in the merit of these dramas from the first to the last. *Manfred* in its own sphere is unrivaled ; it is superb. The other supernatural dramas, *Cain*, *Heaven and Earth*, and *The Deformed Transformed* (if we place the last named in this group), are each a step below the other in excellence. *Marino Faliero*, again, is a powerful production that grips the reader despite its monotony of tone and its overblown heroics. The following secular plays lose regularly in this intensity and singleness of impression. In all other branches — lyric, reflective, satiric, narrative — Byron's work progresses in mastery with almost as perfect a regularity, though his nearest approach to perfection may have come in each *genre* just before the end. This difference between his development in the drama and in the other forms of poetry is no doubt due to the undramatic nature of his genius.]

MANFRED

A DRAMATIC POEM

'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MANFRED
CHAMOIS HUNTER
ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE
MANUEL
HERMAN
WITCH OF THE ALPS
ARIMANES
NEMESIS
THE DESTINIES
SPIRITS, etc.

The scene of the Drama is amongst the Higher Alps — partly in the Castle of Manfred, and partly in the Mountains.

ACT I

SCENE I

MANFRED *alone. — Scene, a Gothic Gallery. — Time, Midnight.*

Man. The lamp must be replenish'd, but even then
It will not burn so long as I must watch.
My slumbers — if I slumber — are not sleep,
But a continuance of enduring thought,
Which then I can resist not: in my heart
There is a vigil, and these eyes but close
To look within; and yet I live, and bear
The aspect and the form of breathing men.
But grief should be the instructor of the wise;
Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,
The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.
Philosophy and science, and the springs
Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world,
I have essay'd, and in my mind there is
A power to make these subject to itself —
But they avail not: I have done men good,
And I have met with good even among men —
But this avail'd not: I have had my foes,
And none have baffled, many fallen before me —

But this avail'd not: — Good, or evil, life,
Powers, passions, all I see in other beings,
Have been to me as rain unto the sands,
Since that all-nameless hour. I have no dread,
And feel the curse to have no natural fear,
Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes or wishes,
Or lurking love of something on the earth.
Now to my task. —
Mysterious Agency!
Ye spirits of the unbounded Universe,
Whom I have sought in darkness and in light!
Ye, who do compass earth about, and dwell
In subtler essence! ye, to whom the tops
Of mountains inaccessible are haunts,
And earth's and ocean's caves familiar things —
I call upon ye by the written charm
Which gives me power upon you — Rise! appear! [*A pause.*
They come not yet. — Now by the voice of him
Who is the first among you; by this sign,
Which makes you tremble; by the claims of him
Who is undying, — Rise! appear! — Appear! [*A pause.*
If it be so. — Spirits of earth and air,
Ye shall not thus elude me: by a power,
Deeper than all yet urged, a tyrant-spell,
Which had its birthplace in a star condemn'd,
The burning wreck of a demolish'd world,
A wandering hell in the eternal space;
By the strong curse which is upon my soul,
The thought which is within me and around me,
I do compel ye to my will. Appear!

[*A star is seen at the darker end of the gallery: it is stationary; and a voice is heard singing.*

FIRST SPIRIT.

Mortal! to thy bidding bow'd,
From my mansion in the cloud,
Which the breath of twilight builds,
And the summer's sunset gilds
With the azure and vermilion
Which is mix'd for my pavilion;
Though thy quest may be forbidden,
On a star-beam I have ridden,
To thine adjuration bow'd;
Mortal — be thy wish avow'd!

Voice of the SECOND SPIRIT.

Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains;
They crown'd him long ago
On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
With a diadem of snow.
Around his waist are forests braced,
The Avalanche in his hand;
But ere it fall, that thundering ball
Must pause for my command.
The Glacier's cold and restless mass
Moves onward day by day;
But I am he who bids it pass,
Or with its ice delay.
I am the spirit of the place,
Could make the mountain bow
And quiver to his cavern'd base —
And what with me wouldst *Thou?*

Voice of the THIRD SPIRIT.

In the blue depth of the waters,
Where the wave hath no strife,
Where the wind is a stranger,
And the sea-snake hath life,
Where the Mermaid is decking
Her green hair with shells;
Like the storm on the surface
Came the sound of thy spells;
O'er my calm Hall of Coral
The deep echo roll'd —
To the Spirit of Ocean
Thy wishes unfold!

FOURTH SPIRIT.

Where the slumbering earthquake
Lies pillow'd on fire,
And the lakes of bitumen
Rise boilingly higher;
Where the roots of the Andes
Strike deep in the earth,
As their summits to heaven
Shoot soaringly forth;
I have quitted my birthplace,
Thy bidding to bide —
Thy spell hath subdued me,
Thy will be my guide!

FIFTH SPIRIT.

I am the Rider of the wind,
The Stirrer of the storm;
The hurricane I left behind
Is yet with lightning warm;
To speed to thee, o'er shore and sea
I swept upon the blast:
The fleet I met sail'd well, and yet
'T will sink ere night be past.

SIXTH SPIRIT.

My dwelling is the shadow of the night,
Why doth thy magic torture me with light?

SEVENTH SPIRIT.

The star which rules thy destiny
Was ruled, ere earth began, by me:
It was a world as fresh and fair
As e'er revolved round sun in air;
Its course was free and regular,
Space bosom'd not a lovelier star.
The hour arrived — and it became
A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
A pathless comet, and a curse,
The menace of the universe;
Still rolling on with innate force,
Without a sphere, without a course,
A bright deformity on high,
The monster of the upper sky!
And thou! beneath its influence born —
Thou worm! whom I obey and scorn —
Forced by a power (which is not thine,
And lent thee but to make thee mine)
For this brief moment to descend,
Where these weak spirits round thee bend
And parley with a thing like thee —
What wouldst thou, Child of Clay, with me?

The SEVEN SPIRITS.

Earth, ocean, air, night, mountains, winds, thy star,
Are at thy beck and bidding, Child of Clay!
Before thee at thy quest their spirits are —
What wouldst thou with us, son of mortals — say?

Man. Forgetfulness —
First Spirit. Of what — of whom — and why?
Man. Of that which is within me; read it there —
Ye know it, and I cannot utter it.
Spirit. We can but give thee that which we possess:
Ask of us subjects, sovereignty, the power
O'er earth, the whole, or portion, or a sign
Which shall control the elements, whereof
We are the dominators, — each and all,
These shall be thine.
Man. Oblivion, self-oblivion —
Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms
Ye offer so profusely what I ask?
Spirit. It is not in our essence, in our skill;
But — thou mayst die.
Man. Will death bestow it on me?
Spirit. We are immortal, and do not forget;
We are eternal; and to us the past
Is as the future, present. Art thou answer'd?
Man. Ye mock me — but the power which brought ye here
Hath made you mine. Slaves, scoff not at my will!
The mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark,
The lightning of my being, is as bright,
Pervading, and far darting as your own,
And shall not yield to yours, though coop'd in clay!
Answer, or I will teach you what I am.
Spirit. We answer as we answer'd; our reply
Is even in thine own words.
Man. Why say ye so?
Spirit. If, as thou say'st, thine essence be as ours,
We have replied in telling thee, the thing
Mortals call death hath nought to do with us.
Man. I then have call'd ye from your realms in vain;
Ye cannot, or ye will not, aid me.
Spirit. Say;
What we possess we offer; it is thine:
Bethink ere thou dismiss us, ask again —
Kingdom, and sway, and strength, and length of days —
Man. Accursèd! what have I to do with days?
They are too long already. — Hence — begone!
Spirit. Yet pause: being here, our will would do thee service;
Bethink thee, is there then no other gift
Which we can make not worthless in thine eyes?
Man. No, none: yet stay — one moment, ere we part —
I would behold ye face to face. I hear
Your voices, sweet and melancholy sounds,
As music on the waters; and I see
The steady aspect of a clear large star;
But nothing more. Approach me as ye are,
Or one, or all, in your accustom'd forms.
Spirit. We have no forms, beyond the elements

Of which we are the mind and principle:
But choose a form — in that we will appear.
Man. I have no choice; there is no form on earth
Hideous or beautiful to me. Let him,
Who is most powerful of ye, take such aspect
As unto him may seem most fitting — Come!
Seventh Spirit (*appearing in the shape of a beautiful female figure*). Behold!
Man. Oh God! if it be thus, and *thou*
Art not a madness and a mockery,
I yet might be most happy. I will clasp thee,
And we again will be — [*The figure vanishes.*
My heart is crush'd!
[Manfred *falls senseless.*

(*A Voice is heard in the Incantation which follows.*)

When the moon is on the wave,
And the glow-worm in the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on the morass;
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answer'd owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
Shall my soul be upon thine,
With a power and with a sign.

Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep;
There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish;
By a power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gather'd in a cloud;
And for ever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of this spell.

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been;
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turn'd around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,
And the power which thou dost feel
Shall be what thou must conceal.

And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse;
And a spirit of the air
Hath begirt thee with a snare;
In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice;
And to thee shall Night deny
All the quiet of her sky;
And the day shall have a sun,
Which shall make thee wish it done.

From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which hath strength to kill;
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring;
From thy own smile I snatch'd the snake,
For there it coil'd as in a brake;
From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm;
In proving every poison known,
I found the strongest was thine own.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathom'd gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;
By the perfection of thine art
Which pass'd for human thine own heart;
By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! and compel
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny;
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear;
Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee;
O'er thy heart and brain together
Hath the word been pass'd — now wither!

SCENE II

The Mountain of the Jungfrau. — Time, Morning. — Manfred *alone upon the Cliffs.*

Man. The spirits I have raised abandon me,
The spells which I have studied baffle me,
The remedy I reck'd of tortured me;
I lean no more on super-human aid,
It hath no power upon the past, and for
The future, till the past be gulf'd in darkness,
It is not of my search. — My mother Earth!
And thou fresh breaking Day, and you, ye Mountains,
Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye.

And thou, the bright eye of the universe,
That openest over all, and unto all
Art a delight — thou shin'st not on my heart.
And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme edge
I stand, and on the torrent's brink beneath
Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs
In dizziness of distance; when a leap,
A stir, a motion, even a breath, would bring
My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed
To rest for ever — wherefore do I pause?
I feel the impulse — yet I do not plunge;
I see the peril — yet do not recede;
And my brain reels — and yet my foot is firm.
There is a power upon me which withholds,
And makes it my fatality to live;
If it be life to wear within myself
This barrenness of spirit, and to be
My own soul's sepulchre, for I have ceased
To justify my deeds unto myself —
The last infirmity of evil. Ay,
Thou wingèd and cloud-cleaving minister,
[*An eagle passes.*
Whose happy flight is highest into heaven,
Well may'st thou swoop so near me — I should be
Thy prey, and gorge thine eaglets; thou art gone
Where the eye cannot follow thee; but thine
Yet pierces downward, onward, or above,
With a pervading vision. — Beautiful!
How beautiful is all this visible world!
How glorious in its action and itself!
But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we,
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence make
A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride,
Contending with low wants and lofty will,
Till our mortality predominates,
And men are — what they name not to themselves,
And trust not to each other. Hark! the note,
[*The Shepherd's pipe in the distance is heard.*
The natural music of the mountain reed
(For here the patriarchal days are not
A pastoral fable) pipes in the liberal air,
Mix'd with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd;
My soul would drink those echoes. — Oh, that I were
The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,
A living voice, a breathing harmony,
A bodiless enjoyment — born and dying
With the blest tone which made me!

Enter from below a CHAMOIS HUNTER.

Chamois Hunter. Even so
This way the chamois leapt: her nimble feet
Have baffled me; my gains to-day will scarce
Repay my break-neck travail. — What is here?
Who seems not of my trade, and yet hath reach'd
A height which none even of our mountaineers,
Save our best hunters, may attain: his garb
Is goodly, his mien manly, and his air
Proud as a freeborn peasant's, at this distance —
I will approach him nearer.
Man. (*not perceiving the other*). To be thus —
Grey-hair'd with anguish, like these blasted pines,
Wrecks of a single winter, barkless, branchless,
A blighted trunk upon a cursèd root,
Which but supplies a feeling to decay —
And to be thus, eternally but thus,
Having been otherwise! Now furrow'd o'er
With wrinkles, plough'd by moments, not by years
And hours — all tortured into ages — hours
Which I outlive! — Ye toppling crags of ice!
Ye avalanches, whom a breath draws down
In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush me!
I hear ye momently above, beneath,
Crash with a frequent conflict; but ye pass,
And only fall on things that still would live;
On the young flourishing forest, or the hut
And hamlet of the harmless villager.
C. Hun. The mists begin to rise from up the valley;
I 'll warn him to descend, or he may chance
To lose at once his way and life together.
Man. The mists boil up around the glaciers; clouds
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,

Like foam from the roused ocean of deep Hell,
Whose every wave breaks on a living shore
Heap'd with the damn'd like pebbles. — I am giddy.
C. Hun. I must approach him cautiously; if near,
A sudden step will startle him, and he
Seems tottering already.
Man. Mountains have fallen,
Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with the shock
Rocking their Alpine brethren; filling up
The ripe green valleys with destruction's splinters;
Damming the rivers with a sudden dash,
Which crush'd the waters into mist and made
Their fountains find another channel — thus,
Thus, in its old age, did Mount Rosenberg —
Why stood I not beneath it?
C. Hun. Friend! have a care,
Your next step may be fatal! — for the love
Of him who made you, stand not on that brink!
Man. (*not hearing him*). Such would have been for me a fitting tomb;
My bones had then been quiet in their depth;
They had not then been strewn upon the rocks
For the wind's pastime — as thus — thus they shall be —
In this one plunge. — Farewell, ye opening heavens!
Look not upon me thus reproachfully —
Ye were not meant for me — Earth! take these atoms!

[*As* MANFRED *is in act to spring from the cliff, the* CHAMOIS HUNTER *seizes and retains him with a sudden grasp.*

C. Hun. Hold, madman! — though aweary of thy life,
Stain not our pure vales with thy guilty blood!
Away with me — I will not quit my hold.
Man. I am most sick at heart — nay, grasp me not —
I am all feebleness — the mountains whirl
Spinning around me — I grow blind — What art thou?
C. Hun. I 'll answer that anon. — Away with me!
The clouds grow thicker — there — now lean on me —
Place your foot here — here, take this staff, and cling
A moment to that shrub — now give me your hand,
And hold fast by my girdle — softly — well —
The Chalet will be gain'd within an hour.
Come on, we 'll quickly find a surer footing,
And something like a pathway, which the torrent
Hath wash'd since winter. — Come, 't is bravely done;
You should have been a hunter. — Follow me.

[*As they descend the rocks with difficulty, the scene closes.*

ACT II

SCENE I

A Cottage amongst the Bernese Alps.

MANFRED *and the* CHAMOIS HUNTER.

C. Hun. No, no, yet pause, thou must not yet go forth:
Thy mind and body are alike unfit
To trust each other, for some hours, at least;
When thou art better, I will be thy guide —
But whither?
Man. It imports not; I do know
My route full well and need no further guidance.
C. Hun. Thy garb and gait bespeak thee of high lineage —
One of the many chiefs, whose castled crags
Look o'er the lower valleys — which of these
May call thee lord? I only know their portals;
My way of life leads me but rarely down
To bask by the huge hearths of those old halls,
Carousing with the vassals; but the paths,
Which step from out our mountains to their doors,
I know from childhood — which of these is thine?
Man. No matter.
C. Hun. Well, sir, pardon me the question,
And be of better cheer. Come, taste my wine;

'T is of an ancient vintage; many a day
'T has thaw'd my veins among our glaciers, now
Let it do thus for thine. Come, pledge me fairly.
Man. Away, away! there 's blood upon the brim!
Will it then never — never sink in the earth?
C. Hun. What dost thou mean? thy senses wander from thee.
Man. I say 't is blood — my blood! the pure warm stream
Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours
When we were in our youth, and had one heart,
And loved each other as we should not love,
And this was shed: but still it rises up,
Colouring the clouds, that shut me out from heaven,
Where thou art not — and I shall never be.
C. Hun. Man of strange words, and some half-maddening sin,
Which makes thee people vacancy, whate'er
Thy dread and sufferance be, there 's comfort yet —
The aid of holy men, and heavenly patience —
Man. Patience and patience! Hence — that word was made
For brutes of burthen, not for birds of prey;
Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine, —
I am not of thine order.
C. Hun. Thanks to heaven!
I would not be of thine for the free fame
Of William Tell; but whatsoe'er thine ill,
It must be borne, and these wild starts are useless.
Man. Do I not bear it? — Look on me — I live.
C. Hun. This is convulsion, and no healthful life.
Man. I tell thee, man! I have lived many years,
Many long years, but they are nothing now
To those which I must number: ages — ages —
Space and eternity — and consciousness,
With the fierce thirst of death — and still unslaked!
C. Hun. Why, on thy brow the seal of middle age
Hath scarce been set; I am thine elder far.
Man. Think'st thou existence doth depend on time?
It doth; but actions are our epochs: mine
Have made my days and nights imperishable,
Endless, and all alike, as sands on the shore,
Innumerable atoms; and one desert,
Barren and cold, on which the wild waves break,
But nothing rests, save carcasses and wrecks,
Rocks, and the salt-surf weeds of bitterness.
C. Hun. Alas! he 's mad — but yet I must not leave him.
Man. I would I were, for then the things I see
Would be but a distemper'd dream.
C. Hun. What is it
That thou dost see, or think thou look'st upon?
Man. Myself, and thee — a peasant of the Alps,
Thy humble virtues, hospitable home,
And spirit patient, pious, proud and free;
Thy self-respect, grafted on innocent thoughts;
Thy days of health, and nights of sleep; thy toils,
By danger dignified, yet guiltless; hopes
Of cheerful old age and a quiet grave,
With cross and garland over its green turf,
And thy grandchildren's love for epitaph;
This do I see — and then I look within —
It matters not — my soul was scorch'd already!
C. Hun. And wouldst thou then exchange thy lot for mine?
Man. No, friend! I would not wrong thee nor exchange
My lot with living being: I can bear —
However wretchedly, 't is still to bear —
In life what others could not brook to dream,
But perish in their slumber.
C. Hun. And with this —
This cautious feeling for another's pain,
Canst thou be black with evil? — say not so.
Can one of gentle thoughts have wreak'd revenge
Upon his enemies?
Man. Oh! no, no, no!
My injuries came down on those who loved me —
On those whom I best loved: I never quell'd
An enemy, save in my just defence —
But my embrace was fatal.

C. Hun. Heaven give thee rest!
And penitence restore thee to thyself;
My prayers shall be for thee.
Man. I need them not,
But can endure thy pity. I depart —
'T is time — farewell! — Here 's gold, and thanks for thee;
No words — it is thy due. Follow me not;
I know my path — the mountain peril 's past:
And once again, I charge thee, follow not!
[*Exit* Manfred.

Scene II

A lower Valley in the Alps. — A Cataract.

Enter Manfred.

It is not noon; the sunbow's rays still arch
The torrent with the many hues of heaven,
And roll the sheeted silver's waving column
O'er the crag's headlong perpendicular,
And fling its lines of foaming light along,
And to and fro, like the pale courser's tail,
The Giant steed, to be bestrode by Death,
As told in the Apocalypse. No eyes
But mine now drink this sight of loveliness;
I should be sole in this sweet solitude,
And with the Spirit of the place divide
The homage of these waters. — I will call her.

[Manfred *takes some of the water into the palm of his hand, and flings it in the air, muttering the adjuration. After a pause, the* Witch of the Alps *rises beneath the arch of the sunbow of the torrent.*

Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light,
And dazzling eyes of glory, in whose form
The charms of earth's least mortal daughters grow
To an unearthly stature, in an essence
Of purer elements; while the hues of youth
(Carnation'd like a sleeping infant's cheek
Rock'd by the beating of her mother's heart,
Or the rose tints, which summer's twilight leaves
Upon the lofty glacier's virgin snow,
The blush of earth embracing with her heaven)
Tinge thy celestial aspect, and make tame
The beauties of the sunbow which bends o'er thee.
Beautiful Spirit! in thy calm clear brow,
Wherein is glass'd serenity of soul,
Which of itself shows immortality,
I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
Of Earth, whom the abstruser powers permit
At times to commune with them — if that he
Avail him of his spells — to call thee thus,
And gaze on thee a moment.
Witch. Son of Earth!
I know thee, and the powers which give thee power;
I know thee for a man of many thoughts,
And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,
Fatal and fated in thy sufferings.
I have expected this — what wouldst thou with me?
Man. To look upon thy beauty — nothing further.
The face of the earth hath madden'd me, and I
Take refuge in her mysteries, and pierce
To the abodes of those who govern her —
But they can nothing aid me. I have sought
From them what they could not bestow, and now
I search no further.
Witch. What could be the quest
Which is not in the power of the most powerful,
The rulers of the invisible?
Man. A boon;
But why should I repeat it? 't were in vain.
Witch. I know not that; let thy lips utter it.
Man. Well, though it torture me, 't is but the same;
My pang shall find a voice. From my youth upwards
My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,
Nor look'd upon the earth with human eyes;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
The aim of their existence was not mine;
My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers,
Made me a stranger; though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh,
Nor midst the creatures of clay that girded me
Was there but one who — but of her anon.
I said, with men, and with the thoughts of men,
I held but slight communion; but instead,
My joy was in the Wilderness, to breathe
The difficult air of the iced mountain's top,
Where the birds dare not build, nor insect's wing
Flit o'er the herbless granite; or to plunge

Into the torrent, and to roll along
On the swift whirl of the new breaking wave
Of river-stream, or ocean, in their flow.
In these my early strength exulted; or
To follow through the night the moving moon,
The stars and their development; or catch
The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim;
Or to look, list'ning, on the scatter'd leaves,
While Autumn winds were at their evening song.
These were my pastimes, and to be alone;
For if the beings, of whom I was one, —
Hating to be so, — cross'd me in my path,
I felt myself degraded back to them,
And was all clay again. And then I dived,
In my lone wanderings, to the caves of death,
Searching its cause in its effect; and drew
From wither'd bones, and skulls, and heap'd up dust,
Conclusions most forbidden. Then I pass'd
The nights of years in sciences, untaught
Save in the old time; and with time and toil,
And terrible ordeal, and such penance
As in itself hath power upon the air
And spirits that do compass air and earth,
Space, and the peopled infinite, I made
Mine eyes familiar with Eternity,
Such as, before me, did the Magi, and
He who from out their fountain dwellings raised
Eros and Anteros, at Gadara,
As I do thee; — and with my knowledge grew
The thirst of knowledge, and the power and joy
Of this most bright intelligence, until —
Witch. Proceed.
Man. Oh! I but thus prolong'd my words,
Boasting these idle attributes, because
As I approach the core of my heart's grief —
But to my task. I have not named to thee
Father or mother, mistress, friend, or being,
With whom I wore the chain of human ties;
If I had such, they seem'd not such to me —
Yet there was one —
Witch. Spare not thyself — proceed.
Man. She was like me in lineaments — her eyes,
Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone
Even of her voice, they said were like to mine;
But soften'd all, and temper'd into beauty;
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,
The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind
To comprehend the universe: nor these
Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine,
Pity, and smiles, and tears — which I had not;
And tenderness — but that I had for her;
Humility — and that I never had.
Her faults were mine — her virtues were her own —
I loved her, and destroy'd her!
Witch. With thy hand?
Man. Not with my hand, but heart — which broke her heart;
It gazed on mine, and wither'd. I have shed
Blood, but not hers — and yet her blood was shed —
I saw, and could not stanch it.
Witch. And for this —
A being of the race thou dost despise,
The order which thine own would rise above,
Mingling with us and ours, thou dost forego
The gifts of our great knowledge, and shrink'st back
To recreant mortality — Away!
Man. Daughter of Air! I tell thee, since that hour —
But words are breath — look on me in my sleep,
Or watch my watchings — Come and sit by me!
My solitude is solitude no more,
But peopled with the Furies; — I have gnash'd
My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
Then cursed myself till sunset; — I have pray'd
For madness as a blessing — 't is denied me.
I have affronted death, but in the war
Of elements the waters shrunk from me,
And fatal things pass'd harmless — the cold hand
Of an all-pitiless demon held me back,
Back by a single hair, which would not break.

In fantasy, imagination, all
The affluence of my soul — which one day was
A Crœsus in creation — I plunged deep,
But, like an ebbing wave, it dash'd me back
Into the gulf of my unfathom'd thought.
I plunged amidst mankind — Forgetfulness
I sought in all, save where 't is to be found,
And that I have to learn — my sciences,
My long pursued and superhuman art,
Is mortal here; I dwell in my despair —
And live — and live for ever.
Witch. It may be
That I can aid thee.
Man. To do this thy power
Must wake the dead, or lay me low with them.
Do so — in any shape — in any hour —
With any torture — so it be the last.
Witch. That is not in my province; but if thou
Wilt swear obedience to my will, and do
My bidding, it may help thee to thy wishes.
Man. I will not swear — Obey! and whom? the spirits
Whose presence I command, and be the slave
Of those who served me — Never!
Witch. Is this all?
Hast thou no gentler answer? — Yet bethink thee,
And pause ere thou rejectest.
Man. I have said it.
Witch. Enough! — I may retire then — say!
Man. Retire! [*The* Witch *disappears.*
Man. (*alone*). We are the fools of time and terror: Days
Steal on us and steal from us; yet we live,
Loathing our life, and dreading still to die.
In all the days of this detested yoke —
This vital weight upon the struggling heart,
Which sinks with sorrow, or beats quick with pain,
Or joy that ends in agony or faintness —
In all the days of past and future, for
In life there is no present, we can number
How few, how less than few, wherein the soul
Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws back
As from a stream in winter, though the chill
Be but a moment's. I have one resource
Still in my science — I can call the dead,
And ask them what it is we dread to be:
The sternest answer can but be the Grave,
And that is nothing; — if they answer not —
The buried Prophet answered to the Hag
Of Endor; and the Spartan Monarch drew
From the Byzantine maid's unsleeping spirit
An answer and his destiny — he slew
That which he loved, unknowing what he slew,
And died unpardon'd — though he call'd in aid
The Phyxian Jove, and in Phigalia roused
The Arcadian Evocators to compel
The indignant shadow to depose her wrath,
Or fix her term of vengeance — she replied
In words of dubious import, but fulfill'd.
If I had never lived, that which I love
Had still been living; had I never loved,
That which I love would still be beautiful —
Happy and giving happiness. What is she?
What is she now? — a sufferer for my sins —
A thing I dare not think upon — or nothing.
Within few hours I shall not call in vain —
Yet in this hour I dread the thing I dare:
Until this hour I never shrunk to gaze
On spirit, good or evil — now I tremble,
And feel a strange cold thaw upon my heart.
But I can act even what I most abhor,
And champion human fears. — The night approaches. [*Exit.*

Scene III

The Summit of the Jungfrau Mountain.

Enter First Destiny.

The moon is rising broad, and round, and bright;
And here on snows, where never human foot
Of common mortal trod, we nightly tread,
And leave no traces; o'er the savage sea,
The glassy ocean of the mountain ice,
We skim its rugged breakers, which put on
The aspect of a tumbling tempest's foam,
Frozen in a moment — a dead whirlpool's image.
And this most steep fantastic pinnacle,
The fretwork of some earthquake — where the clouds
Pause to repose themselves in passing by —
Is sacred to our revels, or our vigils.
Here do I wait my sisters, on our way

To the Hall of Arimanes, for to-night
Is our great festival — 't is strange they come not.

A Voice without, singing.

The Captive Usurper,
Hurl'd down from the throne,
Lay buried in torpor,
Forgotten and lone;
I broke through his slumbers,
I shiver'd his chain,
I leagued him with numbers —
He 's Tyrant again!
With the blood of a million he 'll answer my care,
With a nation's destruction — his flight and despair.

Second Voice, without.

The ship sail'd on, the ship sail'd fast,
But I left not a sail, and I left not a mast;
There is not a plank of the hull or the deck,
And there is not a wretch to lament o'er his wreck;
Save one, whom I held, as he swam, by the hair,
And he was a subject well worthy my care;
A traitor on land, and a pirate at sea —
But I saved him to wreak further havoc for me!

FIRST DESTINY, *answering.*

The city lies sleeping;
The morn, to deplore it,
May dawn on it weeping:
Sullenly, slowly,
The black plague flew o'er it, —
Thousands lie lowly;
Tens of thousands shall perish —
The living shall fly from
The sick they should cherish;
But nothing can vanquish
The touch that they die from.
Sorrow and anguish,
And evil and dread,
Envelope a nation —
The blest are the dead,
Who see not the sight
Of their own desolation;
This work of a night —
This wreck of a realm — this deed of my doing —
For ages I 've done, and shall still be renewing!

Enter the SECOND *and* THIRD DESTINIES.

The Three.

Our hands contain the hearts of men,
Our footsteps are their graves;
We only give to take again
The spirits of our slaves!

First Des. Welcome! Where 's Nemesis?
Second Des. At some great work;
But what I know not, for my hands were full.
Third Des. Behold she cometh.

Enter NEMESIS.

First Des. Say, where hast thou been?
My sisters and thyself are slow to-night.
Nem. I was detain'd repairing shatter'd thrones,
Marrying fools, restoring dynasties,
Avenging men upon their enemies,
And making them repent their own revenge;
Goading the wise to madness; from the dull
Shaping out oracles to rule the world
Afresh, for they were waxing out of date,
And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,
To weigh kings in the balance, and to speak
Of freedom, the forbidden fruit. — Away!
We have outstay'd the hour — mount we our clouds! [*Exeunt.*

Scene IV

The Hall of Arimanes — Arimanes on his Throne, a Globe of Fire, surrounded by the Spirits.

Hymn of the SPIRITS.

Hail to our Master! — Prince of Earth and Air!
Who walks the clouds and waters — in his hand
The sceptre of the elements which tear
Themselves to chaos at his high command!
He breatheth — and a tempest shakes the sea;
He speaketh — and the clouds reply in thunder;
He gazeth — from his glance the sunbeams flee;
He moveth — earthquakes rend the world asunder.
Beneath his footsteps the volcanoes rise;
His shadow is the Pestilence; his path

The comets herald through the crackling skies;
And planets turn to ashes at his wrath.
To him War offers daily sacrifice;
To him Death pays his tribute; Life is his,
With all its infinite of agonies —
And his the spirit of whatever is!

Enter the DESTINIES *and* NEMESIS.

First Des. Glory to Arimanes! on the earth
His power increaseth — both my sisters did
His bidding, nor did I neglect my duty!
Second Des. Glory to Arimanes! we who bow
The necks of men, bow down before his throne!
Third Des. Glory to Arimanes! we await
His nod!
Nem. Sovereign of Sovereigns! we are thine,
And all that liveth, more or less, is ours,
And most things wholly so; still to increase
Our power, increasing thine, demands our care,
And we are vigilant. — Thy late commands
Have been fulfill'd to the utmost.

Enter MANFRED.

A Spirit. What is here?
A mortal! — Thou most rash and fatal wretch,
Bow down and worship!
Second Spirit. I do know the man —
A Magian of great power and fearful skill!
Third Spirit. Bow down and worship, slave! What, know'st thou not
Thine and our Sovereign? — Tremble, and obey!
All the Spirits. Prostrate thyself, and thy condemnèd clay,
Child of the Earth! or dread the worst.
Man. I know it;
And yet ye see I kneel not.
Fourth Spirit. 'T will be taught thee.
Man. 'T is taught already; — many a night on the earth,
On the bare ground, have I bow'd down my face,
And strew'd my head with ashes; I have known
The fulness of humiliation, for
I sunk before my vain despair, and knelt
To my own desolation.
Fifth Spirit. Dost thou dare
Refuse to Arimanes on his throne
What the whole earth accords, beholding not
The terror of his Glory? — Crouch! I say.
Man. Bid *him* bow down to that which is above him,
The overruling Infinite, the Maker
Who made him not for worship — let him kneel,
And we will kneel together.
The Spirits. Crush the worm!
Tear him in pieces! —
First Des. Hence! Avaunt! — he 's mine.
Prince of the Powers invisible! This man
Is of no common order, as his port
And presence here denote. His sufferings
Have been of an immortal nature, like
Our own; his knowledge and his powers and will,
As far as is compatible with clay,
Which clogs the ethereal essence, have been such
As clay hath seldom borne; his aspirations
Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,
And they have only taught him what we know —
That knowledge is not happiness, and science
But an exchange of ignorance for that
Which is another kind of ignorance.
This is not all; the passions, attributes
Of earth and heaven, from which no power, nor being,
Nor breath from the worm upwards is exempt,
Have pierced his heart; and in their consequence
Made him a thing, which I, who pity not,
Yet pardon those who pity. He is mine,
And thine, it may be; — be it so, or not,
No other Spirit in this region hath
A soul like his — or power upon his soul.
Nem. What doth he here then?
First Des. Let him answer that.
Man. Ye know what I have known; and without power
I could not be amongst ye: but there are
Powers deeper still beyond — I come in quest
Of such, to answer unto what I seek.
Nem. What wouldst thou?
Man. Thou canst not reply to me.
Call up the dead — my question is for them.

Nem. Great Arimanes, doth thy will avouch
The wishes of this mortal?
Ari. Yea.
Nem. Whom wouldst thou
Uncharnel?
Man. One without a tomb — call up
Astarte.

NEMESIS.

Shadow! or Spirit!
Whatever thou art,
Which still doth inherit
The whole or a part
Of the form of thy birth,
Of the mould of thy clay
Which return'd to the earth, —
Re-appear to the day!
Bear what thou borest,
The heart and the form,
And the aspect thou worest
Redeem from the worm.
Appear! — Appear! — Appear!
Who sent thee there requires thee here!

[*The phantom of* ASTARTE *rises and stands in the midst.*

Man. Can this be death? there 's bloom upon her cheek;
But now I see it is no living hue,
But a strange hectic — like the unnatural red
Which Autumn plants upon the perish'd leaf.
It is the same! Oh, God! that I should dread
To look upon the same — Astarte! — No,
I cannot speak to her — but bid her speak —
Forgive me or condemn me.

NEMESIS.

By the power which hath broken
The grave which enthrall'd thee,
Speak to him who hath spoken,
Or those who have call'd thee!

Man. She is silent,
And in that silence I am more than answer'd.
Nem. My power extends no further. Prince of air!
It rests with thee alone — command her voice.
Ari. Spirit — obey this sceptre!
Nem. Silent still!
She is not of our order, but belongs
To the other powers. Mortal! thy quest is vain,
And we are baffled also.
Man. Hear me, hear me —
Astarte! my belovèd! speak to me:
I have so much endured, so much endure —
Look on me! the grave hath not changed thee more
Than I am changed for thee. Thou lovèdst me
Too much, as I loved thee: we were not made
To torture thus each other, though it were
The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.
Say that thou loath'st me not, that I do bear
This punishment for both, that thou wilt be
One of the blessèd, and that I shall die;
For hitherto all hateful things conspire
To bind me in existence — in a life
Which makes me shrink from immortality —
A future like the past. I cannot rest.
I know not what I ask, nor what I seek:
I feel but what thou art — and what I am;
And I would hear yet once before I perish
The voice which was my music — Speak to me!
For I have call'd on thee in the still night,
Startled the slumbering birds from the hush'd boughs,
And woke the mountain wolves, and made the caves
Acquainted with thy vainly echo'd name,
Which answer'd me — many things answer'd me —
Spirits and men — but thou wert silent all.
Yet speak to me! I have outwatch'd the stars,
And gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of thee.
Speak to me! I have wander'd o'er the earth,
And never found thy likeness — Speak to me!
Look on the fiends around — they feel for me:
I fear them not, and feel for thee alone.
Speak to me! though it be in wrath; — but say —
I reck not what — but let me hear thee once —
This once — once more!
Phantom of Astarte. Manfred!
Man. Say on, say on —
I live but in the sound — it is thy voice!
Phan. Manfred! To-morrow ends thine earthly ills.
Farewell!

Man. Yet one word more — am I forgiven?
Phan. Farewell!
Man. Say, shall we meet again?
Phan. Farewell!
Man. One word for mercy! Say, thou lovest me.
Phan. Manfred!
[*The Spirit of* ASTARTE *disappears.*
Nem. She 's gone, and will not be recall'd;
Her words will be fulfill'd. Return to the earth.
A Spirit. He is convulsed — This is to be a mortal
And seek the things beyond mortality.
Another Spirit. Yet, see, he mastereth himself, and makes
His torture tributary to his will.
Had he been one of us, he would have made
An awful spirit.
Nem. Hast thou further question
Of our great sovereign, or his worshippers?
Man. None.
Nem. Then for a time farewell.
Man. We meet then! Where? On the earth? —
Even as thou wilt: and for the grace accorded
I now depart a debtor. Fare ye well!
[*Exit* MANFRED.
(*Scene closes.*)

ACT III

SCENE I

A Hall in the Castle of Manfred.

MANFRED *and* HERMAN.

Man. What is the hour?
Her. It wants but one till sunset,
And promises a lovely twilight.
Man. Say,
Are all things so disposed of in the tower
As I directed?
Her. All, my lord, are ready:
Here is the key and casket.
Man. It is well:
Thou may'st retire. [*Exit* HERMAN.
Man. (*alone*). There is a calm upon me —
Inexplicable stillness! which till now
Did not belong to what I knew of life.
If that I did not know philosophy
To be of all our vanities the motliest,
The merest word that ever fool'd the ear
From out the schoolman's jargon, I should deem
The golden secret, the sought 'Kalon,' found,
And seated in my soul. It will not last,
But it is well to have known it, though but once:
It hath enlarged my thoughts with a new sense,
And I within my tablets would note down
That there is such a feeling. Who is there?

Re-enter HERMAN.

Her. My lord, the abbot of St. Maurice craves
To greet your presence.

Enter the ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE.

Abbot. Peace be with Count Manfred!
Man. Thanks, holy father! welcome to these walls;
Thy presence honours them, and blesseth those
Who dwell within them.
Abbot. Would it were so, Count! —
But I would fain confer with thee alone.
Man. Herman, retire. — What would my reverend guest?
Abbot. Thus, without prelude: — Age and zeal, my office,
And good intent, must plead my privilege;
Our near, though not acquainted neighbourhood,
May also be my herald. Rumours strange,
And of unholy nature, are abroad,
And busy with thy name; a noble name
For centuries: may he who bears it now
Transmit it unimpair'd!
Man. Proceed, I listen.
Abbot. 'T is said thou holdest converse with the things
Which are forbidden to the search of man;
That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,
The many evil and unheavenly spirits
Which walk the valley of the shade of death,
Thou communest. I know that with mankind,
Thy fellows in creation, thou dost rarely
Exchange thy thoughts, and that thy solitude
Is as an anchorite's, were it but holy.

Man. And what are they who do avouch these things?
Abbot. My pious brethren, the scared peasantry,
Even thy own vassals, who do look on thee
With most unquiet eyes. Thy life 's in peril.
Man. Take it.
Abbot. I come to save, and not destroy.
I would not pry into thy secret soul;
But if these things be sooth, there still is time
For penitence and pity: reconcile thee
With the true church, and through the church to heaven.
Man. I hear thee. This is my reply: whate'er
I may have been, or am, doth rest between
Heaven and myself; I shall not choose a mortal
To be my mediator. Have I sinn'd
Against your ordinances? prove and punish!
Abbot. My son! I did not speak of punishment,
But penitence and pardon; with thyself
The choice of such remains — and for the last,
Our institutions and our strong belief
Have given me power to smooth the path from sin
To higher hope and better thoughts; the first
I leave to heaven, — 'Vengeance is mine alone!'
So saith the Lord, and with all humbleness
His servant echoes back the awful word.
Man. Old man! there is no power in holy men,
Nor charm in prayer, nor purifying form
Of penitence, nor outward look, nor fast,
Nor agony, nor, greater than all these,
The innate tortures of that deep despair,
Which is remorse without the fear of hell
But all in all sufficient to itself
Would make a hell of heaven, — can exorcise
From out the unbounded spirit the quick sense
Of its own sins, wrongs, sufferance, and revenge
Upon itself; there is no future pang
Can deal that justice on the self-condemn'd
He deals on his own soul.
Abbot. All this is well;
For this will pass away, and be succeeded
By an auspicious hope, which shall look up
With calm assurance to that blessed place
Which all who seek may win, whatever be
Their earthly errors, so they be atoned:
And the commencement of atonement is
The sense of its necessity. — Say on —
And all our church can teach thee shall be taught;
And all we can absolve thee shall be pardon'd.
Man. When Rome's sixth emperor was near his last,
The victim of a self-inflicted wound,
To shun the torments of a public death
From senates once his slaves, a certain soldier,
With show of loyal pity, would have stanch'd
The gushing throat with his officious robe;
The dying Roman thrust him back, and said —
Some empire still in his expiring glance —
'It is too late, is this fidelity?'
Abbot. And what of this?
Man. I answer with the Roman,
'It is too late!'
Abbot. It never can be so,
To reconcile thyself with thy own soul,
And thy own soul with heaven. Hast thou no hope?
'T is strange — even those who do despair above,
Yet shape themselves some fantasy on earth,
To which frail twig they cling like drowning men.
Man. Ay — father! I have had those earthly visions
And noble aspirations in my youth,
To make my own the mind of other men,
The enlightener of nations; and to rise
I knew not whither — it might be to fall;
But fall, even as the mountain-cataract,
Which, having leapt from its more dazzling height,
Even in the foaming strength of its abyss
(Which casts up misty columns that become
Clouds raining from the re-ascended skies)
Lies low but mighty still. — But this is past,
My thoughts mistook themselves.
Abbot. And wherefore so?
Man. I could not tame my nature down; for he
Must serve who fain would sway — and soothe, and sue,
And watch all time, and pry into all place,
And be a living lie, who would become

A mighty thing amongst the mean, and such
The mass are; I disdain'd to mingle with
A herd, though to be leader — and of wolves.
The lion is alone, and so am I.
Abbot. And why not live and act with other men?
Man. Because my nature was averse from life;
And yet not cruel; for I would not make,
But find a desolation. Like the wind,
The red-hot breath of the most lone Simoom,
Which dwells but in the desert and sweeps o'er
The barren sands which bear no shrubs to blast,
And revels o'er their wild and arid waves,
And seeketh not, so that it is not sought,
But being met is deadly, — such hath been
The course of my existence; but there came
Things in my path which are no more.
Abbot. Alas!
I 'gin to fear that thou art past all aid
From me and from my calling; yet so young,
I still would —
Man. Look on me! there is an order
Of mortals on the earth, who do become
Old in their youth, and die ere middle age,
Without the violence of warlike death;
Some perishing of pleasure, some of study,
Some worn with toil, some of mere weariness,
Some of disease, and some insanity,
And some of wither'd or of broken hearts;
For this last is a malady which slays
More than are number'd in the lists of Fate,
Taking all shapes and bearing many names.
Look upon me! for even of all these things
Have I partaken; and of all these things,
One were enough; then wonder not that I
Am what I am, but that I ever was,
Or having been, that I am still on earth.
Abbot. Yet, hear me still —
Man. Old man! I do respect
Thine order, and revere thine years; I deem
Thy purpose pious, but it is in vain.
Think me not churlish; I would spare thyself,
Far more than me, in shunning at this time
All further colloquy; and so — farewell.
[*Exit* MANFRED.
Abbot. This should have been a noble creature: he
Hath all the energy which would have made
A goodly frame of glorious elements,
Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
It is an awful chaos — light and darkness,
And mind and dust, and passions and pure thoughts,
Mix'd, and contending without end or order,
All dormant or destructive. He will perish,
And yet he must not; I will try once more,
For such are worth redemption; and my duty
Is to dare all things for a righteous end.
I'll follow him — but cautiously, though surely.
[*Exit* ABBOT.

SCENE II

Another Chamber.

MANFRED *and* HERMAN.

Her. My lord, you bade me wait on you at sunset:
He sinks beyond the mountain.
Man. Doth he so?
I will look on him.
[MANFRED *advances to the Window of the Hall.*
Glorious Orb! the idol
Of early nature, and the vigorous race
Of undiseased mankind, the giant sons
Of the embrace of angels with a sex
More beautiful than they, which did draw down
The erring spirits who can ne'er return; —
Most glorious orb! that wert a worship, ere
The mystery of thy making was reveal'd!
Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
Which gladden'd, on their mountain tops, the hearts
Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they pour'd
Themselves in orisons! Thou material God!
And representative of the Unknown,
Who chose thee for his shadow! Thou chief star!
Centre of many stars! which mak'st our earth
Endurable, and temperest the hues
And hearts of all who walk within thy rays!
Sire of the seasons! Monarch of the climes,
And those who dwell in them! for near or far,
Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee,
Even as our outward aspects; — thou dost rise,
And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee well!
I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first glance
Of love and wonder was for thee, then take

My latest look: thou wilt not beam on one
To whom the gifts of life and warmth have been
Of a more fatal nature. He is gone;
I follow. [*Exit* Manfred.

Scene III

The Mountains — The Castle of Manfred at some distance — A Terrace before a Tower. — Time, Twilight.

Herman, Manuel, *and other Dependants of* Manfred.

Her. 'T is strange enough; night after night, for years,
He hath pursued long vigils in this tower,
Without a witness. I have been within it, —
So have we all been oft-times; but from it,
Or its contents, it were impossible
To draw conclusions absolute of aught
His studies tend to. To be sure, there is
One chamber where none enter: I would give
The fee of what I have to come these three years,
To pore upon its mysteries.
Manuel. 'T were dangerous;
Content thyself with what thou know'st already.
Her. Ah, Manuel! thou art elderly and wise,
And couldst say much; thou hast dwelt within the castle —
How many years is 't?
Manuel. Ere Count Manfred's birth,
I served his father, whom he nought resembles.
Her. There be more sons in like predicament.
But wherein do they differ?
Manuel. I speak not
Of features or of form, but mind and habits;
Count Sigismund was proud, but gay and free —
A warrior and a reveller; he dwelt not
With books and solitude, nor made the night
A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,
Merrier than day; he did not walk the rocks
And forests like a wolf, nor turn aside
From men and their delights.
Her. Beshrew the hour,
But those were jocund times! I would that such
Would visit the old walls again; they look
As if they had forgotten them.
Manuel. These walls
Must change their chieftain first. Oh! I have seen
Some strange things in them, Herman.
Her. Come, be friendly;
Relate me some to while away our watch:
I 've heard thee darkly speak of an event
Which happen'd hereabouts, by this same tower.
Manuel. That was a night indeed! I do remember
'T was twilight, as it may be now, and such
Another evening; yon red cloud, which rests
On Eigher's pinnacle, so rested then, —
So like that it might be the same; the wind
Was faint and gusty, and the mountain snows
Began to glitter with the climbing moon.
Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower, —
How occupied, we knew not, but with him
The sole companion of his wanderings
And watchings — her, whom of all earthly things
That lived, the only thing he seem'd to love, —
As he, indeed, by blood was bound to do,
The Lady Astarte, his —
Hush! who comes here?

Enter the Abbot.

Abbot. Where is your master?
Her. Yonder in the tower.
Abbot. I must speak with him.
Manuel. 'T is impossible;
He is most private, and must not be thus
Intruded on.
Abbot. Upon myself I take
The forfeit of my fault, if fault there be —
But I must see him.
Her. Thou hast seen him once
This eve already.
Abbot. Herman! I command thee,
Knock, and apprize the Count of my approach.
Her. We dare not.
Abbot. Then it seems I must be herald
Of my own purpose.
Manuel. Reverend father, stop —
I pray you pause.
Abbot. Why so?
Manuel. But step this way,
And I will tell you further. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV

Interior of the Tower.

MANFRED *alone.*

The stars are forth, the moon above the tops
Of the snow-shining mountains. — Beautiful!
I linger yet with Nature, for the night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man; and in her starry shade
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learn'd the language of another world.
I do remember me, that in my youth,
When I was wandering, — upon such a night
I stood within the Coliseum's wall,
Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome.
The trees which grew along the broken arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar
The watch-dog bay'd beyond the Tiber; and
More near from out the Cæsars' palace came
The owl's long cry, and, interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels the fitful song
Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn breach
Appear'd to skirt the horizon, yet they stood
Within a bowshot. Where the Cæsars dwelt,
And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst
A grove which springs through levell'd battlements
And twines its roots with the imperial hearths,
Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth; —
But the gladiators' bloody Circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection!
While Cæsar's chambers and the Augustan halls
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay.
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which soften'd down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and fill'd up,
As 't were anew, the gaps of centuries;
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
And making that which was not, till the place
Became religion, and the heart ran o'er
With silent worship of the great of old, —
The dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule
Our spirits from their urns. —
'T was such a night!
'T is strange that I recall it at this time;
But I have found our thoughts take wildest flight
Even at the moment when they should array
Themselves in pensive order.

Enter the ABBOT.

Abbot. My good lord!
I crave a second grace for this approach;
But yet let not my humble zeal offend
By its abruptness — all it hath of ill
Recoils on me; its good in the effect
May light upon your head — could I say *heart* —
Could I touch *that*, with words or prayers, I should
Recall a noble spirit which hath wander'd
But is not yet all lost.

Man. Thou know'st me not;
My days are number'd, and my deeds recorded:
Retire, or 't will be dangerous — Away!

Abbot. Thou dost not mean to menace me?

Man. Not I;
I simply tell thee peril is at hand,
And would preserve thee.

Abbot. What dost thou mean?

Man. Look there!
What dost thou see?

Abbot. Nothing.

Man. Look there, I say,
And steadfastly; — now tell me what thou seest.

Abbot. That which should shake me — but I fear it not:
I see a dusk and awful figure rise,
Like an infernal god, from out the earth;
His face wrapt in a mantle, and his form
Robed as with angry clouds: he stands between
Thyself and me — but I do fear him not.

Man. Thou hast no cause; he shall not harm thee, but
His sight may shock thine old limbs into palsy.
I say to thee — Retire!

Abbot. And I reply,
Never — till I have battled with this fiend: —
What doth he here?

Man. Why — ay — what doth he here ?
I did not send for him, — he is unbidden.
Abbot. Alas ! lost mortal ! what with guests like these
Hast thou to do? I tremble for thy sake:
Why doth he gaze on thee, and thou on him ?
Ah ! he unveils his aspect: on his brow
The thunder-scars are graven; from his eye
Glares forth the immortality of hell —
Avaunt ! —
Man. Pronounce — what is thy mission ?
Spirit. Come !
Abbot. What art thou, unknown being ? answer ! — speak !
Spirit. The genius of this mortal. — Come ! 't is time.
Man. I am prepared for all things, but deny
The power which summons me. Who sent thee here ?
Spirit. Thou 'lt know anon — Come ! Come !
Man. I have commanded
Things of an essence greater far than thine,
And striven with thy masters. Get thee hence !
Spirit. Mortal ! thine hour is come — Away ! I say.
Man. I knew, and know my hour is come, but not
To render up my soul to such as thee:
Away ! I 'll die as I have lived — alone.
Spirit. Then I must summon up my brethren. — Rise ! [*Other Spirits rise up.*
Abbot. Avaunt ! ye evil ones ! — Avaunt ! I say, —
Ye have no power where piety hath power,
And I do charge ye in the name —
Spirit. Old man !
We know ourselves, our mission, and thine order;
Waste not thy holy words on idle uses,
It were in vain: this man is forfeited.
Once more I summon him — Away ! away !
Man. I do defy ye, — though I feel my soul
Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye;
Nor will I hence, while I have earthly breath
To breathe my scorn upon ye — earthly strength
To wrestle, though with spirits; what ye take
Shall be ta'en limb by limb.
Spirit. Reluctant mortal !
In this the Magian who would so pervade
The world invisible, and make himself
Almost our equal ? — Can it be that thou
Art thus in love with life ? the very life
Which made thee wretched !
Man. Thou false fiend, thou liest !
My life is in its last hour, — *that* I know,
Nor would redeem a moment of that hour.
I do not combat against death, but thee
And thy surrounding angels; my past power
Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,
But by superior science, penance, daring,
And length of watching, strength of mind, and skill
In knowledge of our fathers when the earth
Saw men and spirits walking side by side
And gave ye no supremacy: I stand
Upon my strength — I do defy — deny —
Spurn back, and scorn ye ! —
Spirit. But thy many crimes
Have made thee —
Man. What are they to such as thee ?
Must crimes be punish'd but by other crimes,
And greater criminals ? — Back to thy hell !
Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel;
Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know:
What I have done is done; I bear within
A torture which could nothing gain from thine.
The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts,
Is its own origin of ill and end,
And its own place and time: its innate sense,
When stripp'd of this mortality, derives
No colour from the fleeting things without,
But is absorb'd in sufferance or in joy,
Born from the knowledge of its own desert.
Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;
I have not been thy dupe nor am thy prey,
But was my own destroyer, and will be
My own hereafter. — Back, ye baffled fiends !
The hand of death is on me — but not yours ! [*The Demons disappear.*
Abbot. Alas ! how pale thou art — thy lips are white —
And thy breast heaves — and in thy gasping throat

The accents rattle. Give thy prayers to Heaven —
Pray — albeit but in thought, — but die not thus.
Man. 'T is over — my dull eyes can fix thee not;
But all things swim around me, and the earth
Heaves as it were beneath me. Fare thee well —
Give me thy hand.
Abbot. Cold — cold — even to the heart —
But yet one prayer — Alas! how fares it with thee?
Man. Old man! 't is not so difficult to die. [*Manfred expires.*
Abbot. He's gone, his soul hath ta'en its earthless flight;
Whither? I dread to think; but he is gone.

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS

Dux inquieti turbidus Adriae. — Horace

PREFACE

The conspiracy of the Doge Marino Faliero is one of the most remarkable events in the annals of the most singular government, city, and people of modern history. It occurred in the year 1355. Every thing about Venice is, or was, extraordinary — her aspect is like a dream, and her history is like a romance. The story of this Doge is to be found in all her Chronicles, and particularly detailed in the 'Lives of the Doges,' by Marin Sanuto, which is given in the Appendix. It is simply and clearly related, and is perhaps more dramatic in itself than any scenes which can be founded upon the subject.

Marino Faliero appears to have been a man of talents and of courage. I find him commander in chief of the land forces at the siege of Zara, where he beat the King of Hungary and his army of eighty thousand men, killing eight thousand men, and keeping the besieged at the same time in check; an exploit to which I know none similar in history, except that of Cæsar at Alesia, and of Prince Eugene at Belgrade. He was afterwards commander of the fleet in the same war. He took Capo d'Istria. He was ambassador at Genoa and Rome, — at which last he received the news of his election to the dukedom; his absence being a proof that he sought it by no intrigue, since he was apprised of his predecessor's death and his own succession at the same moment. But he appears to have been of an ungovernable temper. A story is told by Sanuto, of his having, many years before, when podesta and captain at Treviso, boxed the ears of the bishop, who was somewhat tardy in bringing the Host. For this, honest Sanuto 'saddles him with a judgment,' as Thwackum did Square; but he does not tell us whether he was punished or rebuked by the Senate for this outrage at the time of its commission. He seems, indeed, to have been afterwards at peace with the church, for we find him ambassador at Rome, and invested with the fief of Val di Marino, in the march of Treviso, and with the title of Count, by Lorenzo Count-bishop of Ceneda. For these facts my authorities are Sanuto, Vettor Sandi, Andrea Navagero, and the account of the siege of Zara, first published by the indefatigable abbate Morelli, in his 'Monumenti Veneziani di varia Letteratura,' printed in 1796, all of which I have looked over in the original language. The moderns, Daru, Sismondi, and Laugier, nearly agree with the ancient chroniclers. Sismondi attributes the conspiracy to his jealousy; but I find this nowhere asserted by the national historians. Vettor Sandi, indeed, says that 'Altri scrissero che . . . dalla gelosa suspizion di esso Doge siasi fatto (Michel Steno) staccar con violenza,' etc., etc.; but this appears to have been by no means the general opinion, nor is it alluded to by Sanuto or by Navagero; and Sandi himself adds, a moment after, that 'per altre Veneziane memorie traspiri, che non il solo desiderio di vendetta lo dispose alla congiura ma anche la innata abituale ambizion sua, per cui anelava a farsi principe independente.' The first motive appears to have been excited by the gross affront of the words written by Michel Steno on the ducal chair, and by the light and inadequate sentence of the Forty on the offender, who was one of their 'tre Capi.' The attentions of Steno himself appear to have been directed towards one of her damsels, and not to the 'Dogaressa' herself, against whose fame not the slightest insinuation appears, while she is praised for her beauty, and remarked for her youth. Neither do I find it asserted (unless the hint of Sandi be an assertion) that the Doge was actuated by jealousy of his wife; but rather by respect for her, and for his own honour, warranted by his past services and present dignity.

I know not that the historical facts are alluded to in English, unless by Dr. Moore in his View of Italy. His account is false and flippant, full of stale jests about old men and young wives, and wondering at so great an effect from so slight a cause. How so acute and severe an observer of mankind as the author of *Zeluco* could wonder at this is inconceivable. He knew that a basin of water spilt on Mrs. Masham's gown deprived the Duke of Marlborough of his command, and led to the inglorious peace of Utrecht — that Louis XIV. was plunged into the most desolating wars, because his minister was nettled at his finding fault with a window, and wished to give him another occupation — that Helen lost Troy — that Lucretia expelled the Tarquins from Rome — and that Cava brought the Moors to Spain — that an insulted husband led the Gauls to Clusium, and thence to Rome — that a single verse of Frederick II. of Prussia on the Abbé de Bernis, and a jest on Madame de Pompadour, led to the battle of Rosbach — that the elopement of Dearbhorgil with Mac Murchad conducted the English to the slavery of Ireland — that a personal pique between Maria Antoinette and the Duke of Orleans precipitated the first expulsion of the Bourbons — and, not to multiply instances, that Commodus, Domitian, and Caligula fell victims not to their public tyranny, but to private vengeance — and that an order to make Cromwell disembark from the ship in which he would have sailed to America destroyed both king and commonwealth. After these instances, on the least reflection, it is indeed extraordinary in Dr. Moore to seem surprised that a man used to command, who had served and swayed in the most important offices, should fiercely resent, in a fierce age, an unpunished affront, the grossest that can be offered to a man, be he prince or peasant. The age of Faliero is little to the purpose, unless to favour it —

> 'The young man's wrath is like straw on fire,
> *But like red hot steel is the old man's ire.*'

> 'Young men soon give and soon forget affronts,
> Old age is slow at both.'

Laugier's reflections are more philosophical: 'Tale fù il fine ignominioso di un' uomo, che la sua nascità, la sua età, il suo carattere dovevano tener lontano dalle passioni produttrici di grandi delitti. I suoi *talenti* per lungo tempo esercitati ne' maggiori impieghi, la sua capacità sperimentata ne' governi e nelle ambasciate, gli avevano acquistato la stima e la fiducia de' cittadini, ed avevano uniti i suffragj per collocarlo alla testa della republica. Innalzato ad un grado che terminava gloriosamente la sua vita, il risentimento di un' ingiuria leggiera insinuò nel suo cuore tal veleno che bastò a corrompere le antiche sue qualità, e a condurlo al termine dei scellerati; serio esempio, che prova *non esservi età, in cui la prudenza umana sia sicura, e che nell' uomo restano sempre passioni capaci a disonorarlo, quando non invigili sopra se stesso.*' [Laugier, *Italian translation*, vol. iv. pages 30, 31.]

Where did Dr. Moore find that Marino Faliero begged his life? I have searched the chroniclers, and find nothing of the kind; it is true that he avowed all. He was conducted to the place of torture, but there is no mention made of any application for mercy on his part; and the very circumstance of their having taken him to the rack seems to argue any thing but his having shown a want of firmness, which would doubtless have been also mentioned by those minute historians who by no means favour him: such, indeed, would be contrary to his character as a soldier, to the age in which he lived, and *at* which he died, as it is to the truth of history. I know no justification, at any distance of time, for calumniating an historical character: surely truth belongs to the dead, and to the unfortunate; and they who have died upon a scaffold, have generally had faults enough of their own, without attributing to them that which the very incurring of the perils which conducted them to their violent death renders, of all others, the most improbable. The black veil which is painted over the place of Marino Faliero amongst the doges, and the Giants' Staircase where he was crowned, and discrowned, and decapitated, struck forcibly upon my imagination, as did his fiery character and strange story. I went, in 1819, in search of his tomb more than once to the church San Giovanni e San Paolo; and as I was standing before the monument of another family, a priest came up to me and said, 'I can show you finer monuments than that.' I told him that I was in search of that of the Faliero family, and particularly of the Doge Marino's. 'Oh,' said he, 'I will show it you;' and conducting me to the outside, pointed out a sarcophagus in the wall with an illegible inscription. He said that it had been in a convent adjoining, but was removed after the French came, and placed in its present situation; that he had seen the tomb opened at its removal; there were still some bones remaining, but no positive vestige of the decapitation. The equestrian statue of which I have made mention in the third act as before that church is not, however, of a Faliero, but of some other now obsolete warrior, although of a later date. There were two other Doges of this family prior to Marino: Ordelafo, who fell in battle at Zara in 1117 (where his descendant afterwards conquered the Huns), and Vital Faliero, who reigned in 1082. The family, originally from Fano, was of the most illustrious in blood and wealth in the city of once the most wealthy and still the most ancient families in Europe. The length I have gone into on this subject will show the interest I have taken in it. Whether I have succeeded or not in the tragedy, I have at least transferred into our language an historical fact worthy of commemoration.

It is now four years that I have meditated this work; and before I had sufficiently examined the records, I was rather disposed to have made it turn on a jealousy in Faliero. But, perceiving no foundation for this in historical truth, and aware that jealousy is an exhausted passion in the drama, I have given it a more historical form. I was, besides, well advised by the late Matthew Lewis on that point, in talking with him of my intention at Venice in 1817. 'If you make him jealous,' said he, 'recollect that you have to contend with established writers, to say nothing of Shakspeare and an exhausted subject;—stick to the old fiery Doge's natural character, which will bear you out, if properly drawn; and make your plot as regular as you can.' Sir William Drummond gave me nearly the same counsel. How far I have followed these instructions, or whether they have availed me, is not for me to decide. I have had no view to the stage; in its present state it is, perhaps, not a very exalted object of ambition; besides, I have been too much behind the scenes to have thought it so at any time. And I cannot conceive any man of irritable feeling putting himself at the mercies of an audience. The sneering reader, and the loud critic, and the tart review, are scattered and distant calamities; but the trampling of an intelligent or of an ignorant audience on a production which, be it good or bad, has been a mental labour to the writer, is a palpable and immediate grievance, heightened by a man's doubt of their competency to judge, and his certainty of his own imprudence in electing them his judges. Were I capable of writing a play which could be deemed stage-worthy, success would give me no pleasure, and failure great pain. It is for this reason that, even during the time of being one of the committee of one of the theatres, I never made the attempt, and never will. But surely there is dramatic power somewhere, where Joanna Baillie, and Millman, and John Wilson exist. The *City of the Plague* and the *Fall of Jerusalem* are full of the best *matériel* for tragedy that has been since Horace Walpole, except passages of Ethwald and De Montfort. It is the fashion to underrate Horace Walpole; firstly, because he was a nobleman, and, secondly, because he was a gentleman; but, to say nothing of the composition of his incomparable letters, and of the *Castle of Otranto*, he is the 'Ultimus Romanorum,' the author of the *Mysterious Mother*, a tragedy of the highest order, and not a puling love-play. He is the father of the first romance and of the last tragedy in our language, and surely worthy of a higher place than any living writer, be he who he may.

In speaking of the drama *Marino Faliero*, I forgot to mention, that the desire of preserving, though still too remote, a nearer approach to unity than the irregularity, which is the reproach of the English theatrical compositions, permits, has induced me to represent the conspiracy as already formed, and the Doge acceding to it; whereas, in fact, it was of his own preparation and that of Israel Bertuccio. The other characters (except that of the Duchess), incidents, and almost the time, which was wonderfully short for such a design in real life, are strictly historical, except that all the consultations took place in the palace. Had I followed this, the unity would have been better preserved; but I wished to produce the Doge in the full assembly of the conspirators, instead of monotonously placing him always in dialogue with the same individuals. For the real facts, I refer to the Appendix.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN

Marino Faliero, *Doge of Venice.*
Bertuccio Faliero, *Nephew of the Doge.*
Lioni, *a Patrician and Senator.*
Benintende, *Chief of the Council of Ten.*
Michel Steno, *One of the Three Capi of the Forty.*
Israel Bertuccio, *Chief of the Arsenal,*
Philip Calendaro,
Dagolino,
Bertram,
} *Conspirators.*
Signor of the Night ('Signore di Notte'), one of the Officers belonging to the Republic.
First Citizen.
Second Citizen.
Third Citizen.
Vincenzo,
Pietro,
Battista,
} *Officers belonging to the Ducal Palace.*
Secretary of the Council of Ten.
Guards, Conspirators, Citizens, The Council of Ten, The Giunta, etc., etc.

WOMEN

Angiolina, *Wife to the Doge.*
Marianna, *her Friend.*
Female Attendants, etc.

Scene, Venice — in the year 1355.

ACT I

Scene I

An Antechamber in the Ducal Palace.

Pietro *speaks, in entering, to* Battista.

Pie. Is not the messenger return'd?
Bat. Not yet;
I have sent frequently, as you commanded,
But still the Signory is deep in council,
And long debate on Steno's accusation.

Pie. Too long — at least so thinks the Doge.
Bat. How bears he
These moments of suspense?
Pie. With struggling patience.
Placed at the ducal table, cover’d o’er
With all the apparel of the state, petitions,
Despatches, judgments, acts, reprieves, reports,
He sits as rapt in duty; but whene’er
He hears the jarring of a distant door,
Or aught that intimates a coming step,
Or murmur of a voice, his quick eye wanders,
And he will start up from his chair, then pause,
And seat himself again, and fix his gaze
Upon some edict; but I have observed
For the last hour he has not turn’d a leaf.
Bat. ’T is said he is much moved, — and doubtless ’t was
Foul scorn in Steno to offend so grossly.
Pie. Ay, if a poor man: Steno ’s a patrician,
Young, galliard, gay, and haughty.
Bat. Then you think
He will not be judged hardly?
Pie. ’T were enough
He be judged justly; but ’t is not for us
To anticipate the sentence of the Forty.
Bat. And here it comes. — What news, Vincenzo?

Enter Vincenzo.

Vin. ’T is
Decided; but as yet his doom ’s unknown:
I saw the president in act to seal
The parchment which will bear the Forty’s judgment
Unto the Doge, and hasten to inform him.
[*Exeunt.*

Scene II

The Ducal Chamber.

Marino Faliero, *Doge; and his Nephew*, Bertuccio Faliero.

Ber. F. It cannot be but they will do you justice.
Doge. Ay, such as the Avogadori did,
Who sent up my appeal unto the Forty
To try him by his peers, his own tribunal.
Ber. F. His peers will scarce protect him; such an act
Would bring contempt on all authority.
Doge. Know you not Venice? Know you not the Forty?
But we shall see anon.
Ber. F. (*addressing* Vincenzo, *then entering*). How now — what tidings?
Vin. I am charged to tell his highness that the court
Has pass’d its resolution, and that, soon
As the due forms of judgment are gone through,
The sentence will be sent up to the Doge;
In the mean time the Forty doth salute
The Prince of the Republic, and entreat
His acceptation of their duty.
Doge. Yes —
They are wond’rous dutiful, and ever humble.
Sentence is pass’d, you say?
Vin. It is, your highness:
The president was sealing it, when I
Was call’d in, that no moment might be lost
In forwarding the intimation due
Not only to the Chief of the Republic,
But the complainant, both in one united.
Ber. F. Are you aware, from aught you have perceived,
Of their decision?
Vin. No, my lord; you know
The secret custom of the courts in Venice.
Ber. F. True; but there still is something given to guess,
Which a shrewd gleaner and quick eye would catch at;
A whisper, or a murmur, or an air
More or less solemn spread o’er the tribunal.
The Forty are but men — most worthy men,
And wise, and just, and cautious, this I grant,
And secret as the grave to which they doom
The guilty; but with all this, in their aspects —
At least in some, the juniors of the number —
A searching eye, an eye like yours, Vincenzo,
Would read the sentence ere it was pronounced.
Vin. My lord, I came away upon the moment,
And had no leisure to take note of that
Which pass’d among the judges, even in seeming;
My station near the accused too, Michel Steno,
Made me —
Doge (*abruptly*). And how look’d *he*? deliver that.
Vin. Calm, but not overcast, he stood resign’d

To the decree, whate'er it were; — but lo!
It comes, for the perusal of his highness.

Enter the SECRETARY *of the Forty.*

Sec. The high tribunal of the Forty sends
Health and respect to the Doge Faliero,
Chief magistrate of Venice, and requests
His highness to peruse and to approve
The sentence pass'd on Michel Steno, born
Patrician, and arraign'd upon the charge
Contain'd, together with its penalty,
Within the rescript which I now present.
Doge. Retire, and wait without.
[*Exeunt* SECRETARY *and* VINCENZO.
Take thou this paper:
The misty letters vanish from my eyes;
I cannot fix them.
Ber. F. Patience, my dear uncle:
Why do you tremble thus? — nay, doubt not, all
Will be as could be wish'd.
Doge. Say on.
Ber. F. (*reading*). 'Decreed
In council, without one dissenting voice,
That Michel Steno, by his own confession,
Guilty on the last night of Carnival
Of having graven on the ducal throne
The following words — '
Doge. Wouldst thou repeat them?
Wouldst *thou* repeat them — *thou*, a Faliero,
Harp on the deep dishonour of our house,
Dishonour'd in its chief — that chief the prince
Of Venice, first of cities? To the sentence.
Ber. F. Forgive me, my good lord; I will obey —
(*Reads*) 'That Michel Steno be detain'd a month
In close arrest.'
Doge. Proceed.
Ber. F. My lord, 't is finish'd.
Doge. How, say you? — finish'd! Do I dream? — 't is false:
Give me the paper (*Snatches the paper and reads*) — ''T is decreed in council
That Michel Steno' — Nephew, thine arm!
Ber. F. Nay,
Cheer up, be calm; this transport is uncall'd for;
Let me seek some assistance.
Doge. Stop, sir — Stir not —
'T is past.
Ber. F. I cannot but agree with you
The sentence is too slight for the offence;
It is not honourable in the Forty
To affix so slight a penalty to that
Which was a foul affront to you, and even
To them, as being your subjects. But 't is not
Yet without remedy: you can appeal
To them once more, or to the Avogadori,
Who, seeing that true justice is withheld,
Will now take up the cause they once declined,
And do you right upon the bold delinquent.
Think you not thus, good uncle? why do you stand
So fix'd? You heed me not; — I pray you, hear me!
Doge (*dashing down the ducal bonnet, and offering to trample upon it, exclaims, as he is withheld by his nephew*)
Oh, that the Saracen were in Saint Mark's!
Thus would I do him homage.
Ber. F. For the sake
Of Heaven and all its saints, my lord —
Doge. Away!
Oh, that the Genoese were in the port!
Oh, that the Huns whom I o'erthrew at Zara
Were ranged around the palace!
Ber. F. 'T is not well
In Venice' Duke to say so.
Doge. Venice' Duke!
Who now is Duke in Venice? let me see him,
That he may do me right.
Ber. F. If you forget
Your office, and its dignity and duty,
Remember that of man, and curb this passion.
The Duke of Venice —
Doge (*interrupting him*). There is no such thing;
It is a word — nay, worse — a worthless byword.
The most despised, wrong'd, outraged, helpless wretch,
Who begs his bread, if 't is refused by one,
May win it from another kinder heart;
But he, who is denied his right by those
Whose place it is to do no wrong, is poorer
Than the rejected beggar — he 's a slave —
And that am I, and thou, and all our house,
Even from this hour; the meanest artisan
Will point the finger, and the haughty noble
May spit upon us: — where is our redress?
Ber. F. The law, my prince —

Doge (interrupting him). You see what it has done.
I ask'd no remedy but from the law;
I sought no vengeance but redress by law;
I call'd no judges but those named by law;
As sovereign, I appeal'd unto my subjects,
The very subjects who had made me sovereign,
And gave me thus a double right to be so.
The rights of place and choice, of birth and service,
Honours and years, these scars, these hoary hairs,
The travel, toil, the perils, the fatigues,
The blood and sweat of almost eighty years,
Were weigh'd i' the balance, 'gainst the foulest stain,
The grossest insult, most contemptuous crime
Of a rank, rash patrician — and found wanting!
And this is to be borne!
Ber. F. I say not that:
In case your fresh appeal should be rejected,
We will find other means to make all even.
Doge. Appeal again! art thou my brother's son?
A scion of the house of Faliero?
The nephew of a Doge? and of that blood
Which hath already given three dukes to Venice?
But thou say'st well — we must be humble now.
Ber. F. My princely uncle! you are too much moved:
I grant it was a gross offence, and grossly
Left without fitting punishment: but still
This fury doth exceed the provocation,
Or any provocation. If we are wrong'd,
We will ask justice; if it be denied,
We 'll take it; but may do all this in calmness —
Deep Vengeance is the daughter of deep Silence.
I have yet scarce a third part of your years,
I love our house, I honour you, its chief,
The guardian of my youth, and its instructor;
But though I understand your grief, and enter
In part of your disdain, it doth appal me
To see your anger, like our Adrian waves,
O'ersweep all bounds and foam itself to air.
Doge. I tell thee — *must* I tell thee — what thy father
Would have required no words to comprehend?
Hast thou no feeling save the external sense
Of torture from the touch? hast thou no soul,
No pride, no passion, no deep sense of honour?
Ber. F. 'T is the first time that honour has been doubted,
And were the last, from any other sceptic.
Doge. You know the full offence of this born villain,
This creeping, coward, rank, acquitted felon,
Who threw his sting into a poisonous libel,
And on the honour of — oh God! — my wife,
The nearest, dearest part of all men's honour,
Left a base slur to pass from mouth to mouth
Of loose mechanics, with all coarse foul comments,
And villanous jests, and blasphemies obscene;
While sneering nobles, in more polish'd guise,
Whisper'd the tale, and smiled upon the lie
Which made me look like them — a courteous wittol,
Patient — ay, proud, it may be, of dishonour.
Ber. F. But still it was a lie — you knew it false,
And so did all men.
Doge. Nephew, the high Roman
Said, 'Cæsar's wife must not even be suspected,'
And put her from him.
Ber. F. True — but in those days —
Doge. What is it that a Roman would not suffer,
That a Venetian prince must bear? Old Dandolo
Refused the diadem of all the Cæsars,
And wore the ducal cap I trample on,
Because 't is now degraded.
Ber. F. 'T is even so.
Doge. It is — it is. I did not visit on
The innocent creature thus most vilely slander'd

Because she took an old man for her lord,
For that he had been long her father's friend
And patron of her house, as if there were
No love in woman's heart but lust of youth
And beardless faces; — I did not for this
Visit the villain's infamy on her,
But craved my country's justice on his head,
The justice due unto the humblest being
Who hath a wife whose faith is sweet to him,
Who hath a home whose hearth is dear to him,
Who hath a name whose honour 's all to him,
When these are tainted by the accursing breath
Of calumny and scorn.
Ber. F. And what redress
Did you expect as his fit punishment?
Doge. Death! Was I not the sovereign of the state —
Insulted on his very throne, and made
A mockery to the men who should obey me?
Was I not injured as a husband? scorn'd
As man? reviled, degraded, as a prince?
Was not offence like his a complication
Of insult and of treason? — and he lives!
Had he instead of on the Doge's throne
Stamp'd the same brand upon a peasant's stool,
His blood had gilt the threshold; for the carle
Had stabb'd him on the instant.
Ber. F. Do not doubt it,
He shall not live till sunset; leave to me
The means, and calm yourself.
Doge. Hold, nephew: this
Would have sufficed but yesterday; at present
I have no further wrath against this man.
Ber. F. What mean you? is not the offence redoubled
By this most rank — I will not say — acquittal;
For it is worse, being full of acknowledgment
Of the offence, and leaving it unpunish'd?
Doge. It is *redoubled*, but not now by him:
The Forty hath decreed a month's arrest —
We must obey the Forty.
Ber. F. Obey *them!*
Who have forgot their duty to the sovereign?
Doge. Why, yes! — boy, you perceive it then at last:
Whether as fellow-citizen who sues
For justice, or as sovereign who commands it,
They have defrauded me of both my rights
(For here the sovereign is a citizen);
But, notwithstanding, harm not thou a hair
Of Steno's head — he shall not wear it long.
Ber. F. Not twelve hours longer, had you left to me
The mode and means: if you had calmly heard me,
I never meant this miscreant should escape,
But wish'd you to suppress such gusts of passion,
That we more surely might devise together
His taking off.
Doge. No, nephew, he must live;
At least, just now — a life so vile as his
Were nothing at this hour; in th' olden time
Some sacrifices ask'd a single victim,
Great expiations had a hecatomb.
Ber. F. Your wishes are my law: and yet I fain
Would prove to you how near unto my heart
The honour of our house must ever be.
Doge. Fear not; you shall have time and place of proof:
But be not thou too rash, as I have been.
I am ashamed of my own anger now;
I pray you, pardon me.
Ber. F. Why, that 's my uncle!
The leader, and the statesman, and the chief
Of commonwealths, and sovereign of himself!
I wonder'd to perceive you so forget
All prudence in your fury at these years,
Although the cause —
Doge. Ay, think upon the cause —
Forget it not. When you lie down to rest,
Let it be black among your dreams; and when
The morn returns, so let it stand between
The sun and you, as an ill-omen'd cloud
Upon a summer-day of festival:
So will it stand to me; — but speak not, stir not. —

Leave all to me; — we shall have much to do,
And you shall have a part. — But now retire,
'T is fit I were alone.
Ber. F. (*taking up and placing the ducal bonnet on the table*). Ere I depart,
I pray you to resume what you have spurn'd,
Till you can change it haply for a crown.
And now I take my leave, imploring you
In all things to rely upon my duty
As doth become your near and faithful kinsman,
And not less loyal citizen and subject.
[*Exit* Bertuccio Faliero.
Doge (*solus*). Adieu, my worthy nephew. — Hollow bauble;
[*Taking up the ducal cap.*
Beset with all the thorns that line a crown,
Without investing the insulted brow
With the all-swaying majesty of kings;
Thou idle, gilded, and degraded toy,
Let me resume thee as I would a vizor.
[*Puts it on.*
How my brain aches beneath thee ! and my temples
Throb feverish under thy dishonest weight.
Could I not turn thee to a diadem ?
Could I not shatter the Briarean sceptre
Which in this hundred-handed senate rules,
Making the people nothing, and the prince
A pageant ? In my life I have achieved
Tasks not less difficult — achieved for them,
Who thus repay me ! — Can I not requite them ?
Oh for one year ! Oh ! but for even a day
Of my full youth, while yet my body served
My soul as serves the generous steed his lord,
I would have dash'd amongst them, asking few
In aid to overthrow these swoln patricians !
But now I must look round for other hands
To serve this hoary head; but it shall plan
In such a sort as will not leave the task
Herculean, though as yet 't is but a chaos
Of darkly brooding thoughts. My fancy is
In her first work, more nearly to the light
Holding the sleeping images of things
For the selection of the pausing judgment.—
The troops are few in —

Enter Vincenzo.

Vin. There is one without
Craves audience of your highness.
Doge. I 'm unwell;
I can see no one, not even a patrician;
Let him refer his business to the council.
Vin. My lord, I will deliver your reply;
It cannot much import—he 's a plebeian,
The master of a galley, I believe.
Doge. How ! did you say the patron of a galley ?
That is — I mean — a servant of the state:
Admit him, he may be on public service.
[*Exit* Vincenzo.
Doge (*solus*). This patron may be sounded; I will try him.
I know the people to be discontented:
They have cause, since Sapienza's adverse day,
When Genoa conquer'd; they have further cause,
Since they are nothing in the state, and in
The city worse than nothing — mere machines,
To serve the nobles' most patrician pleasure.
The troops have long arrears of pay, oft promised,
And murmur deeply — any hope of change
Will draw them forward: they shall pay themselves
With plunder. But the priests — I doubt the priesthood
Will not be with us; they have hated me
Since that rash hour, when, madden'd with the drone,
I smote the tardy bishop at Treviso,
Quickening his holy march; yet, ne'ertheless,
They may be won, at least their chief at Rome,
By some well-timed concessions. But, above
All things, I must be speedy: at my hour
Of twilight little light of life remains.
Could I free Venice, and avenge my wrongs,
I had lived too long, and willingly would sleep
Next moment with my sires; and, wanting this,
Better that sixty of my fourscore years
Had been already where — how soon, I care not —
The whole must be extinguish'd; — better that
They ne'er had been, than drag me on to be

The thing these arch-oppressors fain would make me.
Let me consider — of efficient troops
There are three thousand posted at —

Enter VINCENZO *and* ISRAEL BERTUCCIO.

Vin. May it please
Your highness, the same patron whom I spake of
Is here to crave your patience.
Doge. Leave the chamber,
Vincenzo. — [*Exit* VINCENZO.
Sir, you may advance — what would you?
I. Ber. Redress.
Doge. Of whom?
I. Ber. Of God and of the Doge.
Doge. Alas! my friend, you seek it of the twain
Of least respect and interest in Venice.
You must address the council.
I. Ber. 'T were in vain;
For he who injured me is one of them.
Doge. There 's blood upon thy face — how came it there?
I. Ber. 'T is mine, and not the first I 've shed for Venice,
But the first shed by a Venetian hand:
A noble smote me.
Doge. Doth he live?
I. Ber. Not long —
But for the hope I had and have, that you,
My prince, yourself a soldier, will redress
Him, whom the laws of discipline and Venice
Permit not to protect himself; if not —
I say no more.
Doge. But something you would do —
Is it not so?
I. Ber. I am a man, my lord.
Doge. Why so is he who smote you.
I. Ber. He is call'd so;
Nay, more, a noble one — at least, in Venice:
But since he hath forgotten that I am one,
And treats me like a brute, the brute may turn —
'T is said the worm will.
Doge. Say — his name and lineage!
I. Ber. Barbaro.
Doge. What was the cause? or the pretext?
I. Ber. I am the chief of the arsenal, employ'd
At present in repairing certain galleys
But roughly used by the Genoese last year.
This morning comes the noble Barbaro
Full of reproof, because our artisans
Had left some frivolous order of his house,
To execute the state's decree: I dared
To justify the men — he raised his hand; —
Behold my blood! the first time it e'er flow'd
Dishonourably.
Doge. Have you long time served?
I. Ber. So long as to remember Zara's siege,
And fight beneath the chief who beat the Huns there,
Sometime my general, now the Doge Faliero.
Doge. How! are we comrades? — the state's ducal robes
Sit newly on me, and you were appointed
Chief of the arsenal ere I came from Rome;
So that I recognised you not. Who placed you?
I. Ber. The late Doge; keeping still my old command
As patron of a galley: my new office
Was given as the reward of certain scars
(So was your predecessor pleased to say):
I little thought his bounty would conduct me
To his successor as a helpless plaintiff;
At least, in such a cause.
Doge. Are you much hurt?
I. Ber. Irreparably in my self-esteem.
Doge. Speak out; fear nothing: being stung at heart,
What would you do to be revenged on this man?
I. Ber. That which I dare not name, and yet will do.
Doge. Then wherefore came you here?
I. Ber. I come for justice,
Because my general is Doge, and will not
See his old soldier trampled on. Had any,
Save Faliero, fill'd the ducal throne,
This blood had been wash'd out in other blood.
Doge. You come to me for justice — unto *me!*
The Doge of Venice, and I cannot give it;
I cannot even obtain it — 't was denied
To me most solemnly an hour ago!
I. Ber. How says your highness?
Doge. Steno is condemn'd
To a month's confinement.
I. Ber. What! the same who dared

To stain the ducal throne with those foul words,
That have cried shame to every ear in Venice?
Doge. Ay, doubtless they have echo'd o'er the arsenal,
Keeping due time with every hammer's clink,
As a good jest to jolly artisans;
Or making chorus to the creaking oar,
In the vile tune of every galley-slave,
Who, as he sung the merry stave, exulted
He was not a shamed dotard like the Doge.
I. Ber. Is 't possible? a month's imprisonment!
No more for Steno?
Doge. You have heard the offence,
And now you know his punishment; and then
You ask redress of *me!* Go to the Forty,
Who pass'd the sentence upon Michel Steno;
They 'll do as much by Barbaro, no doubt.
I. Ber. Ah! dared I speak my feelings!
Doge. Give them breath.
Mine have no further outrage to endure.
I. Ber. Then, in a word, it rests but on your word
To punish and avenge — I will not say
My petty wrong, for what is a mere blow,
However vile, to such a thing as I am?
But the base insult done your state and person.
Doge. You overrate my power, which is a pageant.
This cap is not the monarch's crown; these robes
Might move compassion, like a beggar's rags;
Nay, more, a beggar's are his own, and these
But lent to the poor puppet, who must play
Its part with all its empire in this ermine.
I. Ber. Wouldst thou be king?
Doge. Yes — of a happy people.
I. Ber. Wouldst thou be sovereign lord of Venice?
Doge. Ay.
If that the people shared that sovereignty,
So that nor they nor I were further slaves
To this o'ergrown aristocratic Hydra,
The poisonous heads of whose envenom'd body
Have breathed a pestilence upon us all.
I. Ber. Yet, thou wast born, and still hast lived, patrician.
Doge. In evil hour was I so born; my birth
Hath made me Doge to be insulted: but
I lived and toil'd a soldier and a servant
Of Venice and her people, not the senate;
Their good and my own honour were my guerdon.
I have fought and bled; commanded, ay, and conquer'd;
Have made and marr'd peace oft in embassies,
As it might chance to be our country's 'vantage;
Have traversed land and sea in constant duty,
Through almost sixty years, and still for Venice,
My fathers' and my birthplace, whose dear spires,
Rising at distance o'er the blue Lagoon,
It was reward enough for me to view
Once more; but not for any knot of men,
Nor sect, nor faction, did I bleed or sweat!
But would you know why I have done all this?
Ask of the bleeding pelican why she
Hath ripp'd her bosom; had the bird a voice,
She 'd tell thee 't was for *all* her little ones.
I. Ber. And yet they made thee duke.
Doge. *They made* me so;
I sought it not, the flattering fetters met me
Returning from my Roman embassy,
And never having hitherto refused
Toil, charge, or duty for the state, I did not,
At these late years, decline what was the highest
Of all in seeming, but of all most base
In what we have to do and to endure.
Bear witness for me thou, my injured subject,
When I can neither right myself nor thee.
I. Ber. You shall do both if you possess the will;
And many thousands more not less oppress'd,
Who wait but for a signal — will you give it?
Doge. You speak in riddles.
I. Ber. Which shall soon be read
At peril of my life, if you disdain not
To lend a patient ear.
Doge. Say on.
I. Ber. Not thou.

Nor I alone, are injured and abused,
Contemn'd and trampled on; but the whole people
Groan with the strong conception of their wrongs:
The foreign soldiers in the senate's pay
Are discontented for their long arrears;
The native mariners and civic troops
Feel with their friends; for who is he amongst them
Whose brethren, parents, children, wives, or sisters,
Have not partook oppression, or pollution,
From the patricians? And the hopeless war
Against the Genoese, which is still maintain'd
With the plebeian blood, and treasure wrung
From their hard earnings, has inflamed them further:
Even now — but, I forget that speaking thus,
Perhaps I pass the sentence of my death!
Doge. And suffering what thou hast done — fear'st thou death?
Be silent then, and live on, to be beaten
By those for whom thou hast bled.
I. Ber. No, I will speak
At every hazard; and if Venice' Doge
Should turn delator, be the shame on him,
And sorrow too; for he will lose far more
Than I.
Doge. From me fear nothing; out with it!
I. Ber. Know then, that there are met and sworn in secret
A band of brethren, valiant hearts and true;
Men who have proved all fortunes, and have long
Grieved over that of Venice, and have right
To do so; having served her in all climes,
And having rescued her from foreign foes,
Would do the same from those within her walls.
They are not numerous, nor yet too few
For their great purpose; they have arms, and means,
And hearts, and hopes, and faith, and patient courage.
Doge. For what then do they pause?
I. Ber. An hour to strike.
Doge (*aside*). Saint Mark's shall strike that hour!
I. Ber. I now have placed
My life, my honour, all my earthly hopes
Within thy power, but in the firm belief
That injuries like ours, sprung from one cause,
Will generate one vengeance: should it be so,
Be our chief now — our sovereign hereafter.
Doge. How many are ye?
I. Ber. I 'll not answer that
Till I am answer'd.
Doge. How, sir! do you menace?
I. Ber. No; I affirm. I have betray'd myself;
But there 's no torture in the mystic wells
Which undermine your palace, nor in those
Not less appalling cells, the 'leaden roofs,'
To force a single name from me of others.
The Pozzi and the Piombi were in vain;
They might wring blood from me, but treachery never.
And I would pass the fearful 'Bridge of Sighs,'
Joyous that mine must be the last that e'er
Would echo o'er the Stygian wave which flows
Between the murderers and the murder'd, washing
The prison and the palace walls: there are
Those who would live to think on 't, and avenge me.
Doge. If such your power and purpose, why come here
To sue for justice, being in the course
To do yourself due right?
I. Ber. Because the man
Who claims protection from authority,
Showing his confidence and his submission
To that authority, can hardly be
Suspected of combining to destroy it.
Had I sate down too humbly with this blow,
A moody brow and mutter'd threats had made me
A mark'd man to the Forty's inquisition;
But loud complaint, however angrily
It shapes its phrase, is little to be fear'd,
And less distrusted. But, besides all this,
I had another reason.
Doge. What was that?
I. Ber. Some rumours that the Doge was greatly moved
By the reference of the Avogadori
Of Michel Steno's sentence to the Forty

Had reach'd me. I had served you, honour'd you,
And felt that you were dangerously insulted,
Being of an order of such spirits, as
Requite tenfold both good and evil: 't was
My wish to prove and urge you to redress.
Now you know all; and that I speak the truth,
My peril be the proof.
Doge. You have deeply ventured;
But all must do so who would greatly win:
Thus far I'll answer you — your secret 's safe.
I. Ber. And is this all?
Doge. Unless with all intrusted,
What would you have me answer?
I. Ber. I would have you
Trust him who leaves his life in trust with you.
Doge. But I must know your plan, your names, and numbers;
The last may then be doubled, and the former
Matured and strengthen'd.
I. Ber. We 're enough already;
You are the sole ally we covet now.
Doge. But bring me to the knowledge of your chiefs.
I. Ber. That shall be done upon your formal pledge
To keep the faith that we will pledge to you.
Doge. When? where?
I. Ber. This night I'll bring to your apartment
Two of the principals; a greater number
Were hazardous.
Doge. Stay, I must think of this.
What if I were to trust myself amongst you,
And leave the palace?
I. Ber. You must come alone.
Doge. With but my nephew.
I. Ber. Not were he your son.
Doge. Wretch! darest thou name my son? He died in arms
At Sapienza for this faithless state.
Oh, that he were alive, and I in ashes!
Or that he were alive ere I be ashes!
I should not need the dubious aid of strangers.
I. Ber. Not one of all those strangers whom thou doubtest,
But will regard thee with a filial feeling,
So that thou keep'st a father's faith with them.
Doge. The die is cast. Where is the place of meeting?
I. Ber. At midnight I will be alone and mask'd
Where'er your highness pleases to direct me,
To wait your coming, and conduct you where
You shall receive our homage, and pronounce
Upon our project.
Doge. At what hour arises
The moon?
I. Ber. Late; but the atmosphere is thick and dusky,
'T is a sirocco.
Doge. At the midnight hour, then,
Near to the church where sleep my sires; the same,
Twin-named from the apostles John and Paul;
A gondola, with one oar only, will
Lurk in the narrow channel which glides by.
Be there.
I. Ber. I will not fail.
Doge. And now retire —
I. Ber. In the full hope your highness will not falter
In your great purpose. Prince, I take my leave. [*Exit* ISRAEL BERTUCCIO.
Doge (*solus*). At midnight, by the church Saints John and Paul,
Where sleep my noble fathers, I repair —
To what? to hold a council in the dark
With common ruffians leagued to ruin states!
And will not my great sires leap from the vault,
Where lie two doges who preceded me,
And pluck me down amongst them? Would they could!
For I should rest in honour with the honour'd.
Alas! I must not think of them, but those
Who have made me thus unworthy of a name
Noble and brave as aught of consular
On Roman marbles; but I will redeem it
Back to its antique lustre in our annals,
By sweet revenge on all that 's base in Venice,

And freedom to the rest, or leave it black
To all the growing calumnies of time,
Which never spare the fame of him who fails,
But try the Cæsar, or the Catiline,
By the true touchstone of desert — success.

ACT II

Scene I

An Apartment in the Ducal Palace.

Angiolina (*wife of the* Doge) *and* Marianna.

Ang. What was the Doge's answer?
Mar. That he was
That moment summon'd to a conference;
But 't is by this time ended. I perceived
Not long ago the senators embarking;
And the last gondola may now be seen
Gliding into the throng of barks which stud
The glittering waters.
Ang. Would he were return'd!
He has been much disquieted of late;
And Time, which has not tamed his fiery spirit,
Nor yet enfeebled even his mortal frame
Which seems to be more nourish'd by a soul
So quick and restless that it would consume
Less hardy clay — Time has but little power
On his resentments or his griefs. Unlike
To other spirits of his order, who,
In the first burst of passion, pour away
Their wrath or sorrow, all things wear in him
An aspect of eternity: his thoughts,
His feelings, passions, good or evil, all
Have nothing of old age; and his bold brow
Bears but the scars of mind, the thoughts of years,
Not their decrepitude: and he of late
Has been more agitated than his wont.
Would he were come! for I alone have power
Upon his troubled spirit.
Mar. It is true,
His highness has of late been greatly moved
By the affront of Steno, and with cause:
But the offender doubtless even now
Is doom'd to expiate his rash insult with
Such chastisement as will enforce respect
To female virtue, and to noble blood.
Ang. 'T was a gross insult; but I heed it not
For the rash scorner's falsehood in itself,
But for the effect, the deadly deep impression
Which it has made upon Faliero's soul,
The proud, the fiery, the austere — austere
To all save me: I tremble when I think
To what it may conduct.
Mar. Assuredly
The Doge cannot suspect you?
Ang. Suspect *me!*
Why Steno dared not: when he scrawl'd his lie,
Grovelling by stealth in the moon's glimmering light,
His own still conscience smote him for the act,
And every shadow on the walls frown'd shame
Upon his coward calumny.
Mar. 'T were fit
He should be punish'd grievously.
Ang. He is so.
Mar. What! is the sentence pass'd? is he condemn'd?
Ang. I know not that, but he has been detected.
Mar. And deem you this enough for such foul scorn?
Ang. I would not be a judge in my own cause,
Nor do I know what sense of punishment
May reach the soul of ribalds such as Steno;
But if his insults sink no deeper in
The minds of the inquisitors than they
Have ruffled mine, he will, for all acquittance,
Be left to his own shamelessness or shame.
Mar. Some sacrifice is due to slander'd virtue.
Ang. Why, what is virtue if it needs a victim?
Or if it must depend upon men's words?
The dying Roman said, "'t was but a name:"
It were indeed no more, if human breath
Could make or mar it.
Mar. Yet full many a dame,
Stainless and faithful, would feel all the wrong
Of such a slander; and less rigid ladies,
Such as abound in Venice, would be loud
And all-inexorable in their cry
For justice.
Ang. This but proves it is the name
And not the quality they prize: the first
Have found it a hard task to hold their honour,
If they require it to be blazon'd forth;

And those who have not kept it, seek its seeming
As they would look out for an ornament
Of which they feel the want, but not because
They think it so; they live in others' thoughts,
And would seem honest, as they must seem fair.
Mar. You have strange thoughts for a patrician dame.
Ang. And yet they were my father's; with his name,
The sole inheritance he left.
Mar. You want none;
Wife to a prince, the chief of the Republic.
Ang. I should have sought none though a peasant's bride,
But feel not less the love and gratitude
Due to my father, who bestow'd my hand
Upon his early, tried, and trusted friend,
The Count Val di Marino, now our Doge.
Mar. And with that hand did he bestow your heart?
Ang. He did so, or it had not been bestow'd.
Mar. Yet this strange disproportion in your years,
And, let me add, disparity of tempers,
Might make the world doubt whether such an union
Could make you wisely, permanently happy.
Ang. The world will think with worldlings; but my heart
Has still been in my duties, which are many,
But never difficult.
Mar. And do you love him?
Ang. I love all noble qualities which merit
Love, and I loved my father, who first taught me
To single out what we should love in others,
And to subdue all tendency to lend
The best and purest feelings of our nature
To baser passions. He bestow'd my hand
Upon Faliero: he had known him noble,
Brave, generous; rich in all the qualities
Of soldier, citizen, and friend; in all
Such have I found him as my father said.
His faults are those that dwell in the high bosoms
Of men who have commanded: too much pride,
And the deep passions fiercely foster'd by
The uses of patricians, and a life
Spent in the storms of state and war; and also
From the quick sense of honour, which becomes
A duty to a certain sign, a vice
When overstrain'd, and this I fear in him.
And then he has been rash from his youth upwards,
Yet temper'd by redeeming nobleness
In such sort, that the wariest of republics
Has lavish'd all its chief employs upon him,
From his first fight to his last embassy,
From which on his return the dukedom met him.
Mar. But previous to this marriage, had your heart
Ne'er beat for any of the noble youth,
Such as in years had been more meet to match
Beauty like yours? or since have you ne'er seen
One, who, if your fair hand were still to give,
Might now pretend to Loredano's daughter?
Ang. I answer'd your first question when I said
I married.
Mar. And the second?
Ang. Needs no answer.
Mar. I pray you pardon, if I have offended.
Ang. I feel no wrath, but some surprise: I knew not
That wedded bosoms could permit themselves
To ponder upon what they *now* might choose,
Or aught save their past choice.
Mar. 'T is their past choice
That far too often makes them deem they would
Now choose more wisely, could they cancel it.
Ang. It may be so. I knew not of such thoughts.
Mar. Here comes the Doge — shall I retire?
Ang. It may
Be better you should quit me; he seems rapt
In thought. — How pensively he takes his way! [*Exit* MARIANNA.

Enter the Doge *and* Pietro.

Doge (*musing*). There is a certain Philip Calendaro
Now in the Arsenal, who holds command
Of eighty men, and has great influence
Besides on all the spirits of his comrades.
This man, I hear, is bold and popular,
Sudden and daring, and yet secret; ’t would
Be well that he were won: I needs must hope
That Israel Bertuccio has secured him,
But fain would be —
Pie. My lord, pray pardon me
For breaking in upon your meditation;
The Senator Bertuccio, your kinsman,
Charged me to follow and inquire your pleasure
To fix an hour when he may speak with you.
Doge. At sunset. — Stay a moment — let me see —
Say in the second hour of night. [*Exit* Pietro.
Ang. My lord!
Doge. My dearest child, forgive me — why delay
So long approaching me? — I saw you not.
Ang. You were absorb’d in thought, and he who now
Has parted from you might have words of weight
To bear you from the senate.
Doge. From the senate?
Ang. I would not interrupt him in his duty
And theirs.
Doge. The senate’s duty! you mistake;
’T is we who owe all service to the senate.
Ang. I thought the Duke had held command in Venice.
Doge. He shall. But let that pass. We will be jocund.
How fares it with you? have you been abroad?
The day is overcast, but the calm wave
Favours the gondolier’s light skimming oar;
Or have you held a levee of your friends?
Or has your music made you solitary?
Say — is there aught that you would will within
The little sway now left the Duke? or aught
Of fitting splendour, or of honest pleasure,
Social or lonely, that would glad your heart,
To compensate for many a dull hour, wasted
On an old man oft moved with many cares?
Speak, and ’t is done.
Ang. You ’re ever kind to me.
I have nothing to desire, or to request,
Except to see you oftener and calmer.
Doge. Calmer?
Ang. Ay, calmer, my good lord. — Ah, why
Do you still keep apart, and walk alone,
And let such strong emotions stamp your brow,
As not betraying their full import, yet
Disclose too much?
Doge. Disclose too much! — of what?
What is there to disclose?
Ang. A heart so ill
At ease.
Doge. ’T is nothing, child. — But in the state
You know what daily cares oppress all those
Who govern this precarious commonwealth,
Now suffering from the Genoese without,
And malcontents within — ’t is this which makes me
More pensive and less tranquil than my wont.
Ang. Yet this existed long before, and never
Till in these late days did I see you thus.
Forgive me; there is something at your heart
More than the mere discharge of public duties,
Which long use and a talent like to yours
Have render’d light, nay, a necessity,
To keep your mind from stagnating. ’T is not
In hostile states, nor perils, thus to shake you;
You, who have stood all storms and never sunk,
And climb’d up to the pinnacle of power
And never fainted by the way, and stand
Upon it, and can look down steadily
Along the depth beneath, and ne’er feel dizzy.
Were Genoa’s galleys riding in the port,
Were civil fury raging in Saint Mark’s,
You are not to be wrought on, but would fall,
As you have risen, with an unalter’d brow —
Your feelings now are of a different kind;
Something has stung your pride, not patriotism.
Doge. Pride, Angiolina? Alas! none is left me.

Ang. Yes — the same sin that overthrew the angels,
And of all sins most easily besets
Mortals the nearest to the angelic nature:
The vile are only vain; the great are proud.
Doge. I *had* the pride of honour, of *your* honour,
Deep at my heart — But let us change the theme.
Ang. Ah, no! — As I have ever shared your kindness
In all things else, let me not be shut out
From your distress: were it of public import,
You know I never sought, would never seek
To win a word from you; but feeling now
Your grief is private, it belongs to me
To lighten or divide it. Since the day
When foolish Steno's ribaldry detected
Unfix'd your quiet, you are greatly changed,
And I would soothe you back to what you were.
Doge. To what I was! — Have you heard Steno's sentence?
Ang. No.
Doge. A month's arrest.
Ang. Is it not enough?
Doge. Enough! — yes, for a drunken galley-slave,
Who, stung by stripes, may murmur at his master;
But not for a deliberate, false, cool villain,
Who stains a lady's and a prince's honour,
Even on the throne of his authority.
Ang. There seems to me enough in the conviction
Of a patrician guilty of a falsehood:
All other punishment were light unto
His loss of honour.
Doge. Such men have no honour;
They have but their vile lives — and these are spared.
Ang. You would not have him die for this offence?
Doge. Not *now*: — being still alive, I'd have him live
Long as *he* can; he has ceased to merit death;
The guilty saved hath damn'd his hundred judges,
And he is pure, for now his crime is theirs.
Ang. Oh, had this false and flippant libeller
Shed his young blood for his absurd lampoon,
Ne'er from that moment could this breast have known
A joyous hour, or dreamless slumber more.
Doge. Does not the law of Heaven say blood for blood?
And he who *taints* kills more than he who sheds it.
Is it the *pain* of blows, or *shame* of blows,
That make such deadly to the sense of man?
Do not the laws of man say blood for honour?
And, less than honour, for a little gold?
Say not the laws of nations blood for treason?
Is 't nothing to have fill'd these veins with poison
For their once healthful current? is it nothing
To have stain'd your name and mine — the noblest names?
Is 't nothing to have brought into contempt
A prince before his people? to have fail'd
In the respect accorded by mankind
To youth in woman, and old age in man?
To virtue in your sex, and dignity
In ours? — But let them look to it who have saved him.
Ang. Heaven bids us to forgive our enemies.
Doge. Doth Heaven forgive her own? Is there not Hell
For wrath eternal?
Ang. Do not speak thus wildly —
Heaven will alike forgive you and your foes.
Doge. Amen! May Heaven forgive them!
Ang. And will you?
Doge. Yes, when they are in heaven!
Ang. And not till then?
Doge. What matters my forgiveness? an old man's,
Worn out, scorn'd, spurn'd, abused; what matters then
My pardon more than my resentment, both
Being weak and worthless? I have lived too long. —
But let us change the argument. My child!
My injured wife, the child of Loredano,
The brave, the chivalrous, how little deem'd
Thy father, wedding thee unto his friend,
That he was linking thee to shame! — Alas!
Shame without sin, for thou art faultless. Hadst thou

But had a different husband, *any* husband
In Venice save the Doge, this blight, this brand,
This blasphemy, had never fallen upon thee, —
So young, so beautiful, so good, so pure,
To suffer this, and yet be unavenged!
Ang. I am too well avenged, for you still love me,
And trust, and honour me; and all men know
That you are just, and I am true: what more
Could I require, or you command?
Doge. 'T is well
And may be better; but whate'er betide,
Be thou at least kind to my memory.
Ang. Why speak you thus?
Doge. It is no matter why;
But I would still, whatever others think,
Have your respect both now and in my grave.
Ang. Why should you doubt it? has it ever fail'd?
Doge. Come hither, child; I would a word with you.
Your father was my friend; unequal fortune
Made him my debtor for some courtesies
Which bind the good more firmly. When, oppress'd
With his last malady, he will'd our union,
It was not to repay me, long repaid
Before by his great loyalty in friendship;
His object was to place your orphan beauty
In honourable safety from the perils,
Which, in this scorpion nest of vice, assail
A lonely and undower'd maid. I did not
Think with him, but would not oppose the thought
Which soothed his death-bed.
Ang. I have not forgotten
The nobleness with which you bade me speak,
If my young heart held any preference
Which would have made me happier; nor your offer
To make my dowry equal to the rank
Of aught in Venice, and forego all claim
My father's last injunction gave you.
Doge. Thus,
'T was not a foolish dotard's vile caprice,
Nor the false edge of aged appetite,
Which made me covetous of girlish beauty,
And a young bride: for in my fieriest youth
I sway'd such passions; nor was this my age
Infected with that leprosy of lust
Which taints the hoariest years of vicious men,
Making them ransack to the very last
The dregs of pleasure for their vanish'd joys;
Or buy in selfish marriage some young victim,
Too helpless to refuse a state that 's honest,
Too feeling not to know herself a wretch.
Our wedlock was not of this sort; you had
Freedom from me to choose, and urged in answer
Your father's choice.
Ang. I did so; I would do so
In face of earth and heaven; for I have never
Repented for my sake; sometimes for yours,
In pondering o'er your late disquietudes.
Doge. I knew my heart would never treat you harshly;
I knew my days could not disturb you long;
And then the daughter of my earliest friend,
His worthy daughter, free to choose again,
Wealthier and wiser, in the ripest bloom
Of womanhood, more skilful to select
By passing these probationary years,
Inheriting a prince's name and riches,
Secured, by the short penance of enduring
An old man for some summers, against all
That law's chicane or envious kinsmen might
Have urged against her right; my best friend's child
Would choose more fitly in respect of years,
And not less truly in a faithful heart.
Ang. My lord, I look'd but to my father's wishes,
Hallow'd by his last words, and to my heart
For doing all its duties, and replying
With faith to him with whom I was affianced.
Ambitious hopes ne'er cross'd my dreams; and should
The hour you speak of come, it will be seen so.
Doge. I do believe you; and I know you true:
For love, romantic love, which in my youth
I knew to be illusion, and ne'er saw
Lasting, but often fatal, it had been

Now darkling in their close toward the deep vale
Where Death sits robed in his all-sweeping shadow.
When I am gone — it may be sooner than
Even these years warrant, for there is that stirring
Within, above, around, that in this city
Will make the cemeteries populous
As e'er they were by pestilence or war, —
When I *am* nothing, let that which I *was*
Be still sometimes a name on thy sweet lips,
A shadow in thy fancy, of a thing
Which would not have thee mourn it, but remember; —
Let us begone, my child, the time is pressing. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II

A retired Spot near the Arsenal.

Israel Bertuccio *and* Philip Calendaro.

Cal. How sped you, Israel, in your late complaint?
I. Ber. Why, well.
Cal. Is 't possible! will he be punish'd?
I. Ber. Yes.
Cal. With what? a mulct or an arrest?
I. Ber. With death!
Cal. Now you rave, or must intend revenge,
Such as I counsell'd you, with your own hand.
I. Ber. Yes; and for one sole draught of hate, forego
The great redress we meditate for Venice,
And change a life of hope for one of exile;
Leaving one scorpion crush'd, and thousands stinging
My friends, my family, my countrymen!
No, Calendaro; these same drops of blood,
Shed shamefully, shall have the whole of his
For their requital — But not only his;
We will not strike for private wrongs alone;
Such are for selfish passions and rash men,
But are unworthy a tyrannicide.
Cal. You have more patience than I care to boast.
Had I been present when you bore this insult,
I must have slain him, or expired myself
In the vain effort to repress my wrath.
I. Ber. Thank Heaven, you were not — all had else been marr'd:
As 't is, our cause looks prosperous still.
Cal. You saw
The Doge — what answer gave he?
I. Ber. That there was
No punishment for such as Barbaro.
Cal. I told you so before, and that 't was idle
To think of justice from such hands.
I. Ber. At least,
It lull'd suspicion, showing confidence.
Had I been silent, not a sbirro but
Had kept me in his eye, as meditating
A silent, solitary, deep revenge.
Cal. But wherefore not address you to the Council?
The Doge is a mere puppet, who can scarce
Obtain right for himself. Why speak to him?
I. Ber. You shall know that hereafter.
Cal. Why not now?
I. Ber. Be patient but till midnight. Get your musters,
And bid our friends prepare their companies:
Set all in readiness to strike the blow,
Perhaps in a few hours; we have long waited
For a fit time — that hour is on the dial,
It may be, of to-morrow's sun: delay
Beyond may breed us double danger. See
That all be punctual at our place of meeting,
And arm'd, excepting those of the Sixteen,
Who will remain among the troops to wait
The signal.
Cal. These brave words have breathed new life
Into my veins; I am sick of these protracted
And hesitating councils: day on day
Crawl'd on, and added but another link
To our long fetters, and some fresher wrong
Inflicted on our brethren or ourselves,
Helping to swell our tyrant's bloated strength.
Let us but deal upon them, and I care not
For the result, which must be death or freedom!
I 'm weary to the heart of finding neither.
I. Ber. We will be free in life or death! the grave
Is chainless. Have you all the musters ready?
And are the sixteen companies completed
To sixty?
Cal. All save two, in which there are
Twenty-five wanting to make up the number.

I. Ber. No matter; we can do without. Whose are they?
Cal. Bertram's and old Soranzo's, both of whom
Appear less forward in the cause than we are.
I. Ber. Your fiery nature makes you deem all those
Who are not restless, cold: but there exists
Oft in concentred spirits not less daring
Than in more loud avengers. Do not doubt them.
Cal. I do not doubt the elder; but in Bertram
There is a hesitating softness, fatal
To enterprise like ours: I 've seen that man
Weep like an infant o'er the misery
Of others, heedless of his own, though greater;
And in a recent quarrel I beheld him
Turn sick at sight of blood, although a villain's.
I. Ber. The truly brave are soft of heart and eyes,
And feel for what their duty bids them do.
I have known Bertram long; there doth not breathe
A soul more full of honour.
Cal. It may be so:
I apprehend less treachery than weakness;
Yet as he has no mistress, and no wife,
To work upon his milkiness of spirit,
He may go through the ordeal. It is well
He is an orphan, friendless save in us:
A woman or a child had made him less
Than either in resolve.
I. Ber. Such ties are not
For those who are call'd to the high destinies
Which purify corrupted commonwealths.
We must forget all feelings save the *one*;
We must resign all passions save our purpose;
We must behold no object save our country;
And only look on death as beautiful,
So that the sacrifice ascend to heaven
And draw down freedom on her evermore.
Cal. But if we fail —
I. Ber. They never fail who die
In a great cause: the block may soak their gore;
Their heads may sodden in the sun; their limbs
Be strung to city gates and castle walls —
But still their spirit walks abroad. Though years
Elapse, and others share as dark a doom,
They but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts
Which overpower all others, and conduct
The world at last to freedom. What were we,
If Brutus had not lived? He died in giving
Rome liberty, but left a deathless lesson —
A name which is a virtue, and a soul
Which multiplies itself throughout all time,
When wicked men wax mighty, and a state
Turns servile: he and his high friend were styled
'The last of Romans!' Let us be the first
Of true Venetians, sprung from Roman sires.
Cal. Our fathers did not fly from Attila
Into these isles, where palaces have sprung
On banks redeem'd from the rude ocean's ooze,
To own a thousand despots in his place.
Better bow down before the Hun, and call
A Tartar lord, than these swoln silkworms masters!
The first at least was man, and used his sword
As sceptre: these unmanly creeping things
Command our swords, and rule us with a word
As with a spell.
I. Ber. It shall be broken soon.
You say that all things are in readiness:
To-day I have not been the usual round,
And why thou knowest; but thy vigilance
Will better have supplied my care. These orders
In recent council to redouble now
Our efforts to repair the galleys, have
Lent a fair colour to the introduction
Of many of our cause into the arsenal,
As new artificers for their equipment,
Or fresh recruits obtain'd in haste to man
The hoped-for fleet. Are all supplied with arms?
Cal. All who were deem'd trustworthy: there are some
Whom it were well to keep in ignorance
Till it be time to strike, and then supply them;
When in the heat and hurry of the hour
They have no opportunity to pause,
But needs must on with those who will surround them.

I. Ber. You have said well. Have you remark'd all such?
Cal. I 've noted most; and caused the other chiefs
To use like caution in their companies.
As far as I have seen, we are enough
To make the enterprise secure, if 't is
Commenced to-morrow; but, till 't is begun,
Each hour is pregnant with a thousand perils.
I. Ber. Let the Sixteen meet at the wonted hour,
Except Soranzo, Nicoletto Blondo,
And Marco Giuda, who will keep their watch
Within the arsenal, and hold all ready,
Expectant of the signal we will fix on.
Cal. We will not fail.
I. Ber. Let all the rest be there;
I have a stranger to present to them.
Cal. A stranger! doth he know the secret?
I. Ber. Yes.
Cal. And have you dared to peril your friends' lives
On a rash confidence in one we know not?
I. Ber. I have risk'd no man's life except my own —
Of that be certain: he is one who may
Make our assurance doubly sure, according
His aid; and if reluctant, he no less
Is in our power: he comes alone with me,
And cannot 'scape us; but he will not swerve.
Cal. I cannot judge of this until I know him:
Is he one of our order?
I. Ber. Ay, in spirit,
Although a child of greatness; he is one
Who would become a throne, or overthrow one —
One who has done great deeds, and seen great changes;
No tyrant, though bred up to tyranny;
Valiant in war, and sage in council; noble
In nature, although haughty; quick, yet wary:
Yet for all this, so full of certain passions,
That if once stirr'd and baffled, as he has been
Upon the tenderest points, there is no Fury
In Grecian story like to that which wrings
His vitals with her burning hands, till he
Grows capable of all things for revenge:
And add too, that his mind is liberal;
He sees and feels the people are oppress'd,
And shares their sufferings. Take him all in all,
We have need of such, and such have need of us.
Cal. And what part would you have him take with us?
I. Ber. It may be, that of chief.
Cal. What! and resign
Your own command as leader?
I. Ber. Even so.
My object is to make your cause end well,
And not to push myself to power. Experience,
Some skill, and your own choice, had mark'd me out
To act in trust as your commander, till
Some worthier should appear. If I have found such
As you yourselves shall own more worthy, think you
That I would hesitate from selfishness,
And, covetous of brief authority,
Stake our deep interest on my single thoughts,
Rather than yield to one above me in
All leading qualities? No, Calendaro,
Know your friend better; but you all shall judge.
Away! and let us meet at the fix'd hour.
Be vigilant, and all will yet go well.
Cal. Worthy Bertuccio, I have known you ever
Trusty and brave, with head and heart to plan
What I have still been prompt to execute.
For my own part, I seek no other chief;
What the rest will decide I know not, but
I am with YOU, as I have ever been,
In all our undertakings. Now farewell,
Until the hour of midnight sees us meet.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III

SCENE I

Scene, the Space between the Canal and the Church of San Giovanni e San Paolo. An equestrian Statue before it. A Gondola lies in the Canal at some distance.

Enter the DOGE *alone, disguised.*

Doge (solus). I am before the hour, the hour whose voice,
Pealing into the arch of night, might strike
These palaces with ominous tottering,
And rock their marbles to the corner-stone,

Waking the sleepers from some hideous dream
Of indistinct but awful augury
Of that which will befall them. Yes, proud city!
Thou must be cleansed of the black blood which makes thee
A lazar-house of tyranny: the task
Is forced upon me, I have sought it not;
And therefore was I punish'd, seeing this
Patrician pestilence spread on and on,
Until at length it smote me in my slumbers,
And I am tainted, and must wash away
The plague spots in the healing wave. Tall fane!
Where sleep my fathers, whose dim statues shadow
The floor which doth divide us from the dead,
Where all the pregnant hearts of our bold blood,
Moulder'd into a mite of ashes, hold
In one shrunk heap what once made many heroes,
When what is now a handful shook the earth —
Fane of the tutelar saints who guard our house!
Vault where two Doges rest — my sires! who died
The one of toil, the other in the field,
With a long race of other lineal chiefs
And sages, whose great labours, wounds, and state
I have inherited, — let the graves gape,
Till all thine aisles be peopled with the dead,
And pour them from thy portals to gaze on me!
I call them up, and them and thee to witness
What it hath been which put me to this task —
Their pure high blood, their blazon-roll of glories,
Their mighty name dishonour'd all *in* me,
Not *by* me, but by the ungrateful nobles
We fought to make our equals, not our lords: —
And chiefly thou, Ordelafo the brave,
Who perish'd in the field, where I since conquer'd,
Battling at Zara, did the hecatombs
Of thine and Venice' foes, there offer'd up
By thy descendant, merit such acquittance?
Spirits! smile down upon me; for my cause
Is yours, in all life now can be of yours, —
Your fame, your name, all mingled up in mine,
And in the future fortunes of our race!
Let me but prosper, and I make this city
Free and immortal, and our house's name
Worthier of what you were, now and hereafter!

Enter ISRAEL BERTUCCIO.

I. Ber. Who goes there?
Doge. A friend to Venice.
I. Ber. 'T is he.
Welcome, my lord, — you are before the time.

Doge. I am ready to proceed to your assembly.

I. Ber. Have with you. — I am proud and pleased to see
Such confident alacrity. Your doubts
Since our last meeting, then, are all dispell'd?

Doge. Not so, but I have set my little left
Of life upon this cast: the die was thrown
When I first listen'd to your treason — Start not!
That is the word; I cannot shape my tongue
To syllable black deeds into smooth names,
Though I be wrought on to commit them. When
I heard you tempt your sovereign, and forbore
To have you dragg'd to prison, I became
Your guiltiest accomplice: now you may,
If it so please you, do as much by me.

I. Ber. Strange words, my lord, and most unmerited;
I am no spy, and neither are we traitors.

Doge. *We!* — *We!* — no matter — you have earn'd the right
To talk of *us*. — But to the point. If this
Attempt succeeds, and Venice, render'd free
And flourishing, when we are in our graves,
Conducts her generations to our tombs,
And makes her children with their little hands
Strew flowers o'er her deliverers' ashes, then
The consequence will sanctify the deed,
And we shall be like the two Bruti in
The annals of hereafter; but if not,
If we should fail, employing bloody means
And secret plot, although to a good end,
Still we are traitors, honest Israel; — thou

No less than he who was thy sovereign
Six hours ago, and now thy brother rebel.
I. Ber. 'T is not the moment to consider thus,
Else I could answer. — Let us to the meeting,
Or we may be observed in lingering here.
Doge. We *are* observed, and have been.
I. Ber. We observed?
Let me discover — and this steel —
Doge. Put up;
Here are no human witnesses; look there —
What see you?
I. Ber. Only a tall warrior's statue
Bestriding a proud steed, in the dim light
Of the dull moon.
Doge. That warrior was the sire
Of my sire's fathers, and that statue was
Decreed to him by the twice rescued city: —
Think you that he looks down on us, or no?
I. Ber. My lord, these are mere fantasies; there are
No eyes in marble.
Doge. But there are in Death.
I tell thee, man, there is a spirit in
Such things that acts and sees, unseen, though felt;
And, if there be a spell to stir the dead,
'T is in such deeds as we are now upon.
Deem'st thou the souls of such a race as mine
Can rest, when he, their last descendant chief,
Stands plotting on the brink of their pure graves
With stung plebeians?
I. Ber. It had been as well
To have ponder'd this before, — ere you embark'd
In our great enterprise. Do you repent?
Doge. No, but I *feel*, and shall do to the last.
I cannot quench a glorious life at once,
Nor dwindle to the thing I now must be,
And take men's lives by stealth, without some pause.
Yet doubt me not; it is this very feeling,
And knowing *what* has wrung me to be thus,
Which is your best security. There 's not
A roused mechanic in your busy plot
So wrong'd as I, so fall'n, so loudly call'd
To his redress: the very means I am forced
By these fell tyrants to adopt is such,
That I abhor them doubly for the deeds
Which I must do to pay them back for theirs.
I. Ber. Let us away — hark — the hour strikes.
Doge. On — on —
It is our knell, or that of Venice — On.
I. Ber. Say rather, 't is her freedom's rising peal
Of triumph. This way — we are near the place. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

The House where the Conspirators meet.

DAGOLINO, DORO, BERTRAM, FEDELE TREVISANO, CALENDARO, ANTONIO DELLE BENDE, ETC., ETC.

Cal. (*entering*). Are all here?
Dag. All with you; except the three
On duty, and our leader Israel,
Who is expected momently.
Cal. Where 's Bertram?
Ber. Here!
Cal. Have you not been able to complete
The number wanting in your company?
Ber. I had mark'd out some: but I have not dared
To trust them with the secret, till assured
That they were worthy faith.
Cal. There is no need
Of trusting to their faith: *who*, save ourselves
And our more chosen comrades, is aware
Fully of our intent? they think themselves
Engaged in secret to the Signory,
To punish some more dissolute young nobles
Who have defied the law in their excesses;
But once drawn up, and their new swords well-flesh'd
In the rank hearts of the more odious senators,
They will not hesitate to follow up
Their blow upon the others, when they see
The example of their chiefs, and I for one
Will set them such, that they for very shame
And safety will not pause till all have perish'd.
Ber. How say you? *all!*
Cal. Whom wouldst thou spare?
Ber. *I spare?*
I have no power to spare. I only question'd,
Thinking that even amongst these wicked men

There might be some, whose age and qualities
Might mark them out for pity.
Cal. Yes, such pity
As when the viper hath been cut to pieces,
The separate fragments quivering in the sun
In the last energy of venomous life,
Deserve and have. Why, I should think as soon
Of pitying some particular fang which made
One in the jaw of the swoln serpent, as
Of saving one of these: they form but links
Of one long chain; one mass, one breath, one body;
They eat, and drink, and live, and breed together,
Revel, and lie, oppress, and kill in concert, —
So let them die as *one!*
Dag. Should *one* survive,
He would be dangerous as the whole; it is not
Their number, be it tens or thousands, but
The spirit of this aristocracy
Which must be rooted out; and if there were
A single shoot of the old tree in life,
'T would fasten in the soil, and spring again
To gloomy verdure and to bitter fruit.
Bertram, we must be firm!
Cal. Look to it well,
Bertram; I have an eye upon thee.
Ber. Who
Distrusts me?
Cal. Not I; for if I did so,
Thou wouldst not now be there to talk of trust:
It is thy softness, not thy want of faith,
Which makes thee to be doubted.
Ber. You should know
Who hear me, who and what I am; a man
Roused like yourselves to overthrow oppression;
A kind man, I am apt to think, as some
Of you have found me; and if brave or no,
You, Calendaro, can pronounce, who have seen me
Put to the proof; or, if you should have doubts,
I 'll clear them on your person!
Cal. You are welcome,
When once our enterprise is o'er, which must not
Be interrupted by a private brawl.
Ber. I am no brawler; but can bear myself
As far among the foe as any he
Who hears me; else why have I been selected
To be of your chief comrades? but no less
I own my natural weakness; I have not
Yet learn'd to think of indiscriminate murder
Without some sense of shuddering; and the sight
Of blood which spouts through hoary scalps is not
To me a thing of triumph, nor the death
Of man surprised a glory. Well — too well
I know that we must do such things on those
Whose acts have raised up such avengers; but
If there were some of these who could be saved
From out this sweeping fate, for our own sakes
And for our honour, to take off some stain
Of massacre which else pollutes it wholly,
I had been glad; and see no cause in this
For sneer, nor for suspicion!
Dag. Calm thee, Bertram;
For we suspect thee not, and take good heart.
It is the cause, and not our will, which asks
Such actions from our hands: we 'll wash away
All stains in Freedom's fountain!

Enter ISRAEL BERTUCCIO, *and the* DOGE, *disguised.*

Dag. Welcome, Israel.
Consp. Most welcome. — Brave Bertuccio, thou art late —
Who is this stranger?
Cal. It is time to name him.
Our comrades are even now prepared to greet him
In brotherhood, as I have made it known
That thou wouldst add a brother to our cause,
Approved by thee, and thus approved by all,
Such is our trust in all thine actions. Now
Let him unfold himself.

I. Ber. Stranger, step forth!
[*The* DOGE *discovers himself.*
Consp. To arms! — we are betray'd — it is the Doge!
Down with them both! our traitorous captain, and
The tyrant he hath sold us to!
Cal. (*drawing his sword*). Hold! hold!
Who moves a step against them dies. Hold! hear
Bertuccio — What! are you all appall'd to see
A lone, unguarded, weaponless old man
Amongst you? — Israel, speak! what means this mystery?
I. Ber. Let them advance and strike at their own bosoms,
Ungrateful suicides! for on our lives
Depend their own, their fortunes, and their hopes.
Doge. Strike! — If I dreaded death, a death more fearful
Than any your rash weapons can inflict,
I should not now be here. — Oh! noble Courage!
The eldest born of Fear, which makes you brave
Against this solitary hoary head!
See the bold chiefs, who would reform a state
And shake down senates, mad with wrath and dread
At sight of one patrician! Butcher me,
You can; I care not. Israel, are these men
The mighty hearts you spoke of? look upon them!
Cal. Faith! he hath shamed us, and deservedly.
Was this your trust in your true chief Bertuccio,
To turn your swords against him and his guest?
Sheathe them, and hear him.
I. Ber. I disdain to speak.
They might and must have known a heart like mine
Incapable of treachery; and the power
They gave me to adopt all fitting means
To further their design was ne'er abused.
They might be certain that whoe'er was brought
By me into this council had been led
To take his choice — as brother, or as victim.
Doge. And which am I to be? your actions leave
Some cause to doubt the freedom of the choice.
I. Ber. My lord, we would have perish'd here together,
Had these rash men proceeded; but, behold,
They are ashamed of that mad moment's impulse,
And droop their heads; believe me, they are such
As I described them. Speak to them.
Cal. Ay, speak;
We are all listening in wonder.
I. Ber. (*addressing the Conspirators*). You are safe,
Nay, more, almost triumphant — listen then,
And know my words for truth.
Doge. You see me here,
As one of you hath said, an old, unarm'd,
Defenceless man; and yesterday you saw me
Presiding in the hall of ducal state,
Apparent sovereign of our hundred isles,
Robed in official purple, dealing out
The edicts of a power which is not mine,
Nor yours, but of our masters — the patricians.
Why I was there you know, or think you know;
Why I am *here*, he who hath been most wrong'd,
He who among you hath been most insulted,
Outraged and trodden on, until he doubt
If he be worm or no, may answer for me,
Asking of his own heart what brought him here?
You know my recent story, all men know it,
And judge of it far differently from those
Who sate in judgment to heap scorn on scorn.
But spare me the recital — it is here,
Here at my heart the outrage; but my words,
Already spent in unavailing plaints,
Would only show my feebleness the more,
And I come here to strengthen even the strong,
And urge them on to deeds, and not to war
With woman's weapons; but I need not urge you.

Our private wrongs have sprung from public vices,
In this — I cannot call it commonwealth
Nor kingdom, which hath neither prince nor people,
But all the sins of the old Spartan state
Without its virtues — temperance and valour.
The lords of Lacedæmon were true soldiers,
But ours are Sybarites, while we are Helots,
Of whom I am the lowest, most enslaved;
Although dress'd out to head a pageant, as
The Greeks of yore made drunk their slaves to form
A pastime for their children. You are met
To overthrow this monster of a state,
This mockery of a government, this spectre
Which must be exorcised with blood, — and then
We will renew the times of truth and justice,
Condensing in a fair free commonwealth
Not rash equality but equal rights,
Proportion'd like the columns to the temple,
Giving and taking strength reciprocal,
And making firm the whole with grace and beauty,
So that no part could be removed without
Infringement of the general symmetry.
In operating this great change, I claim
To be one of you — if you trust in me;
If not, strike home, — my life is compromised,
And I would rather fall by freemen's hands
Than live another day to act the tyrant
As delegate of tyrants. Such I am not,
And never have been — read it in our annals;
I can appeal to my past government
In many lands and cities; they can tell you
If I were an oppressor, or a man
Feeling and thinking for my fellow men.
Haply had I been what the senate sought,
A thing of robes and trinkets, dizen'd out
To sit in state as for a sovereign's picture,
A popular scourge, a ready sentence-signer,
A stickler for the Senate and 'the Forty,'
A sceptic of all measures which had not
The sanction of 'the Ten,' a council-fawner,
A tool, a fool, a puppet, — they had ne'er
Foster'd the wretch who stung me. What I suffer
Has reach'd me through my pity for the people;
That many know, and they who know not yet
Will one day learn. Meantime, I do devote,
Whate'er the issue, my last days of life —
My present power such as it is — not that
Of Doge, but of a man who has been great
Before he was degraded to a Doge,
And still has individual means and mind;
I stake my fame (and I had fame), my breath
(The least of all, for its last hours are nigh),
My heart, my hope, my soul, upon this cast!
Such as I am, I offer me to you
And to your chiefs: accept me or reject me,
A Prince who fain would be a citizen
Or nothing, and who has left his throne to be so.

Cal. Long live Faliero! — Venice shall be free!

Consp. Long live Faliero!

I. Ber. Comrades! did I well?
Is not this man a host in such a cause?

Doge. This is no time for eulogies, nor place
For exultation. Am I one of you?

Cal. Ay, and the first amongst us, as thou hast been
Of Venice — be our general and chief.

Doge. Chief! — general! — I was general at Zara,
And chief in Rhodes and Cyprus, prince in Venice.
I cannot stoop — that is, I am not fit
To lead a band of — patriots: when I lay
Aside the dignities which I have borne,
'T is not to put on others, but to be
Mate to my fellows — but now to the point.
Israel has stated to me your whole plan;
'T is bold, but feasible if I assist it,
And must be set in motion instantly.

Cal. E'en when thou wilt. Is it not so, my friends?
I have disposed all for a sudden blow;
When shall it be then?

Doge. At sunrise.

Ber. So soon?

Doge. So soon! — so late — each hour accumulates
Peril on peril, and the more so now

Since I have mingled with you; — know you not
The Council and 'the Ten?' the spies, the eyes
Of the patricians dubious of their slaves,
And now more dubious of the prince they have made one?
I tell you, you must strike, and suddenly,
Full to the Hydra's heart — its heads will follow.
Cal. With all my soul and sword, I yield assent;
Our companies are ready, sixty each,
And all now under arms by Israel's order;
Each at their different place of rendezvous,
And vigilant, expectant of some blow;
Let each repair for action to his post!
And now, my lord, the signal?
Doge. When you hear
The great bell of Saint Mark's, which may not be
Struck without special order of the Doge
(The last poor privilege they leave their prince),
March on Saint Mark's!
I. Ber. And there? —
Doge. By different routes
Let your march be directed, every sixty
Entering a separate avenue, and still
Upon the way let your cry be of war
And of the Genoese fleet, by the first dawn
Discern'd before the port; form round the palace,
Within whose court will be drawn out in arms
My nephew and the clients of our house,
Many and martial; while the bell tolls on,
Shout ye, 'Saint Mark! — the foe is on our waters!'
Cal. I see it now — but on, my noble lord.
Doge. All the patricians flocking to the Council
(Which they dare not refuse, at the dread signal
Pealing from out their patron saint's proud tower),
Will then be gather'd in unto the harvest,
And we will reap them with the sword for sickle.
If some few should be tardy or absent them,
'T will be but to be taken faint and single,
When the majority are put to rest.
Cal. Would that the hour were come! we will not scotch,
But kill.
Ber. Once more, sir, with your pardon, I
Would now repeat the question which I ask'd
Before Bertuccio added to our cause
This great ally who renders it more sure,
And therefore safer, and as such admits
Some dawn of mercy to a portion of
Our victims — must all perish in this slaughter?
Cal. All who encounter me and mine, be sure,
The mercy they have shown, I show.
Consp. All! All!
Is this a time to talk of pity? When
Have they e'er shown, or felt, or feign'd it?
I. Ber. Bertram,
This false compassion is a folly, and
Injustice to thy comrades and thy cause!
Dost thou not see, that if we single out
Some for escape, they live but to avenge
The fallen? and how distinguish now the innocent
From out the guilty? all their acts are *one* —
A single emanation from one body,
Together knit for our oppression! 'T is
Much that we let their children live; I doubt
If all of these even should be set apart:
The hunter may reserve some single cub
From out the tiger's litter, but who e'er
Would seek to save the spotted sire or dam,
Unless to perish by their fangs? However,
I will abide by Doge Faliero's counsel:
Let him decide if any should be saved.
Doge. Ask me not — tempt me not with such a question —
Decide yourselves.
I. Ber. You know their private virtues
Far better than we can, to whom alone
Their public vices and most foul oppression
Have made them deadly; if there be amongst them
One who deserves to be repeal'd, pronounce.
Doge. Dolfino's father was my friend, and Lando
Fought by my side, and Marc Cornaro shared
My Genoese embassy: I saved the life
Of Veniero — shall I save it twice?
Would that I could save them and Venice also!

All these men, or their fathers, were my friends
Till they became my subjects; then fell from me
As faithless leaves drop from the o'erblown flower,
And left me a lone blighted thorny stalk,
Which, in its solitude, can shelter nothing;
So, as they let me wither, let them perish!
Cal. They cannot co-exist with Venice' freedom!
Doge. Ye, though you know and feel our mutual mass
Of many wrongs, even ye are ignorant
What fatal poison to the springs of life,
To human ties, and all that 's good and dear,
Lurks in the present institutes of Venice.
All these men were my friends; I loved them, they
Requited honourably my regards;
We served and fought; we smiled and wept in concert;
We revell'd or we sorrow'd side by side;
We made alliances of blood and marriage;
We grew in years and honours fairly, — till
Their own desire, not my ambition, made
Them choose me for their prince, and then farewell!
Farewell all social memory! all thoughts
In common! and sweet bonds which link old friendships,
When the survivors of long years and actions,
Which now belong to history, soothe the days
Which yet remain by treasuring each other,
And never meet, but each beholds the mirror
Of half a century on his brother's brow,
And sees a hundred beings, now in earth,
Flit round them whispering of the days gone by,
And seeming not all dead, as long as two
Of the brave, joyous, reckless, glorious band,
Which once were one and many, still retain
A breath to sigh for them, a tongue to speak
Of deeds that else were silent, save on marble —
Oime! Oime! — and must I do this deed?
I. Ber. My lord, you are much moved: it is not now
That such things must be dwelt upon.
Doge. Your patience
A moment — I recede not: mark with me
The gloomy vices of this government.
From the hour they made me Doge, the *Doge* THEY *made* me —
Farewell the past! I died to all that had been,
Or rather they to me: no friends, no kindness,
No privacy of life — all were cut off:
They came not near me, such approach gave umbrage;
They could not love me, such was not the law;
They thwarted me, 't was the state's policy;
They baffled me, 't was a patrician's duty;
They wrong'd me, for such was to right the state;
They could not right me, that would give suspicion;
So that I was a slave to my own subjects;
So that I was a foe to my own friends;
Begirt with spies for guards, with robes for power,
With pomp for freedom, gaolers for a council,
Inquisitors for friends, and hell for life!
I had one only fount of quiet left,
And *that* they poison'd! My pure household gods
Were shiver'd on my hearth, and o'er their shrine
Sate grinning Ribaldry and sneering Scorn.
I. Ber. You have been deeply wrong'd, and now shall be
Nobly avenged before another night.
Doge. I had borne all — it hurt me, but I bore it —
Till this last running over of the cup
Of bitterness — until this last loud insult,
Not only unredress'd, but sanction'd; then,
And thus, I cast all further feelings from me —
The feelings which they crush'd for me, long, long
Before, even in their oath of false allegiance!
Even in that very hour and vow, they abjured
Their friend and made a sovereign, as boys make
Playthings, to do their pleasure — and be broken!
I from that hour have seen but senators
In dark suspicious conflict with the Doge,

Brooding with him in mutual hate and fear;
They dreading he should snatch the tyranny
From out their grasp, and he abhorring tyrants.
To me, then, these men have no *private* life,
Nor claim to ties they have cut off from others;
As senators for arbitrary acts
Amenable, I look on them — as such
Let them be dealt upon.

Cal. And now to action!
Hence, brethren, to our posts, and may this be
The last night of mere words: I'd fain be doing!
Saint Mark's great bell at dawn shall find me wakeful!

I. Ber. Disperse then to your posts: be firm and vigilant;
Think on the wrongs we bear, the rights we claim.
This day and night shall be the last of peril!
Watch for the signal, and then march. I go
To join my band; let each be prompt to marshal
His separate charge: the Doge will now return
To the palace to prepare all for the blow.
We part to meet in freedom and in glory!

Cal. Doge, when I greet you next, my homage to you
Shall be the head of Steno on this sword!

Doge. No; let him be reserved unto the last,
Nor turn aside to strike at such a prey,
Till nobler game is quarried: his offence
Was a mere ebullition of the vice,
The general corruption generated
By the foul aristocracy: he could not —
He dared not — in more honourable days
Have risk'd it. I have merged all private wrath
Against him in the thought of our great purpose.
A slave insults me — I require his punishment
From his proud master's hands; if he refuse it,
The offence grows his, and let him answer it.

Cal. Yet, as the immediate cause of the alliance
Which consecrates our undertaking more,
I owe him such deep gratitude, that fain
I would repay him as he merits; may I?

Doge. You would but lop the hand, and I the head;
You would but smite the scholar, I the master;
You would but punish Steno, I the senate.
I cannot pause on individual hate,
In the absorbing, sweeping, whole revenge,
Which, like the sheeted fire from heaven, must blast
Without distinction, as it fell of yore
Where the Dead Sea hath quench'd two cities' ashes.

I. Ber. Away, then, to your posts! I but remain
A moment to accompany the Doge
To our late place of tryst, to see no spies
Have been upon the scout, and thence I hasten
To where my allotted band is under arms.

Cal. Farewell, then, — until dawn!

I. Ber. Success go with you!

Consp. We will not fail. — Away! My lord, farewell.

[*The Conspirators salute the* DOGE *and* ISRAEL BERTUCCIO, *and retire, headed by* PHILIP CALENDARO. *The* DOGE *and* ISRAEL BERTUCCIO *remain.*

I. Ber. We have them in the toil — it cannot fail!
Now thou 'rt indeed a sovereign, and wilt make
A name immortal greater than the greatest.
Free citizens have struck at kings ere now;
Cæsars have fallen, and even patrician hands
Have crush'd dictators, as the popular steel
Has reach'd patricians; but until this hour,
What prince has plotted for his people's freedom?
Or risk'd a life to liberate his subjects?
For ever, and for ever, they conspire
Against the people to abuse their hands
To chains, but laid aside to carry weapons
Against the fellow nations, so that yoke
On yoke, and slavery and death may whet,
Not glut, the never-gorged Leviathan!
Now, my lord, to our enterprise; 't is great,
And greater the reward; why stand you rapt?
A moment back, and you were all impatience!

Doge. And is it then decided! must they die?

I. Ber. Who?

Doge. My own friends by blood and courtesy,
And many deeds and days — the senators?
I. Ber. You pass'd their sentence, and it is a just one.
Doge. Ay, so it seems, and so it is to *you;*
You are a patriot, a plebeian Gracchus,
The rebel's oracle, the people's tribune —
I blame you not, you act in your vocation;
They smote you, and oppress'd you, and despised you;
So they have *me:* but *you* ne'er spake with them;
You never broke their bread, nor shared their salt;
You never had their wine-cup at your lips;
You grew not up with them, nor laugh'd, nor wept,
Nor held a revel in their company;
Ne'er smiled to see them smile, nor claim'd their smile
In social interchange for yours, nor trusted,
Nor wore them in your heart of hearts, as I have.
These hairs of mine are grey, and so are theirs,
The elders of the council: I remember
When all our locks were like the raven's wing,
As we went forth to take our prey around
The isles wrung from the false Mahometan;
And can I see them dabbled o'er with blood?
Each stab to them will seem my suicide.
I. Ber. Doge! Doge! this vacillation is unworthy
A child; if you are not in second childhood,
Call back your nerves to your own purpose, nor
Thus shame yourself and me. By heavens! I 'd rather
Forego even now, or fail in our intent,
Than see the man I venerate subside
From high resolves into such shallow weakness!
You have seen blood in battle, shed it, both
Your own and that of others; can you shrink then
From a few drops from veins of hoary vampires,
Who but give back what they have drain'd from millions?
Doge. Bear with me! Step by step, and blow on blow,
I will divide with you; think not I waver:
Ah! no; it is the *certainty* of all
Which I must do doth make me tremble thus.
But let these last and lingering thoughts have way,
To which you only and the Night are conscious,
And both regardless; when the hour arrives,
'T is mine to sound the knell, and strike the blow,
Which shall unpeople many palaces,
And hew the highest genealogic trees
Down to the earth, strew'd with their bleeding fruit,
And crush their blossoms into barrenness.
This will I — must I — have I sworn to do,
Nor aught can turn me from my destiny;
But still I quiver to behold what I
Must be, and think what I have been! Bear with me.
I. Ber. Re-man your breast; I feel no such remorse,
I understand it not: why should you change?
You acted, and you act on your free will.
Doge. Ay, there it is — *you* feel not, nor do I,
Else I should stab thee on the spot, to save
A thousand lives, and, killing, do no murder;
You *feel* not — *you* go to this butcher-work
As if these high-born men were steers for shambles!
When all is over, you 'll be free and merry,
And calmly wash those hands incarnadine;
But I, outgoing thee and all thy fellows
In this surpassing massacre, shall be,
Shall see and feel — oh God! oh God! 't is true
And thou dost well to answer that it was
'My own free will and act,' and yet you err,
For I *will* do this! Doubt not — fear not; I
Will be your most unmerciful accomplice!
And yet I act no more on my free will,
Nor my own feelings — both compel me back;
But there is *hell* within me and around,
And like the demon who believes and trembles
Must I abhor and do. Away! away!

Get thee unto thy fellows, I will hie me
To gather the retainers of our house.
Doubt not, Saint Mark's great bell shall wake all Venice,
Except her slaughter'd senate. Ere the sun
Be broad upon the Adriatic, there
Shall be a voice of weeping, which shall drown
The roar of waters in the cry of blood!
I am resolved — come on.

I. Ber. With all my soul!
Keep a firm rein upon these bursts of passion;
Remember what these men have dealt to thee,
And that this sacrifice will be succeeded
By ages of prosperity and freedom
To this unshackled city. A true tyrant
Would have depopulated empires, nor
Have felt the strange compunction which hath wrung you
To punish a few traitors to the people.
Trust me, such were a pity more misplaced
Than the late mercy of the state to Steno.

Doge. Man, thou hast struck upon the chord which jars
All nature from my heart. Hence to our task! [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV

SCENE I

Palazzo of the Patrician LIONI. LIONI *laying aside the mask and cloak which the Venetian nobles wore in public, attended by a Domestic.*

Lioni. I will to rest, right weary of this revel,
The gayest we have held for many moons,
And yet, I know not why, it cheer'd me not;
There came a heaviness across my heart,
Which, in the lightest movement of the dance,
Though eye to eye, and hand in hand united
Even with the lady of my love, oppress'd me,
And through my spirit chill'd my blood, until
A damp like death rose o'er my brow. I strove
To laugh the thought away, but 't would not be;
Through all the music ringing in my ears
A knell was sounding as distinct and clear,
Though low and far, as e'er the Adrian wave
Rose o'er the city's murmur in the night,
Dashing against the outward Lido's bulwark:
So that I left the festival before
It reach'd its zenith, and will woo my pillow
For thoughts more tranquil, or forgetfulness.
Antonio, take my mask and cloak, and light
The lamp within my chamber.

Ant. Yes, my lord:
Command you no refreshment?

Lioni. Nought, save sleep,
Which will not be commanded. Let me hope it, [*Exit* ANTONIO.
Though my breast feels too anxious; I will try
Whether the air will calm my spirits; 't is
A goodly night; the cloudy wind which blew
From the Levant hath crept into its cave,
And the broad moon has brighten'd. What a stillness! [*Goes to an open lattice.*
And what a contrast with the scene I left,
Where the tall torches' glare, and silver lamps'
More pallid gleam along the tapestried walls,
Spread over the reluctant gloom, which haunts
Those vast and dimly-latticed galleries,
A dazzling mass of artificial light,
Which show'd all things, but nothing as they were.
There Age essaying to recall the past,
After long striving for the hues of youth
At the sad labour of the toilet, and
Full many a glance at the too faithful mirror,
Prank'd forth in all the pride of ornament,
Forgot itself, and trusting to the falsehood
Of the indulgent beams, which show, yet hide,
Believed itself forgotten, and was fool'd.
There Youth, which needed not, nor thought of such
Vain adjuncts, lavish'd its true bloom, and health,
And bridal beauty, in the unwholesome press
Of flush'd and crowded wassailers, and wasted
Its hours of rest in dreaming this was pleasure,
And so shall waste them till the sunrise streams
On sallow cheeks and sunken eyes, which should not
Have worn this aspect yet for many a year.
The music, and the banquet, and the wine —

The garlands, the rose odours, and the flowers —
The sparkling eyes, and flashing ornaments —
The white arms and the raven hair — the braids
And bracelets; swanlike bosoms, and the necklace,
An India in itself; yet dazzling not
The eye like what it circled; the thin robes,
Floating like light clouds ’twixt our gaze and heaven;
The many-twinkling feet so small and sylphlike,
Suggesting the more secret symmetry
Of the fair forms which terminate so well —
All the delusion of the dizzy scene,
Its false and true enchantments — art and nature,
Which swam before my giddy eyes, that drank
The sight of beauty as the parch’d pilgrim’s
On Arab sands the false mirage which offers
A lucid lake to his eluded thirst, —
Are gone. Around me are the stars and waters —
Worlds mirror’d in the ocean, goodlier sight
Than torches glared back by a gaudy glass;
And the great element, which is to space
What ocean is to earth, spreads its blue depths,
Soften’d with the first breathings of the spring;
The high moon sails upon her beauteous way,
Serenely smoothing o’er the lofty walls
Of those tall piles and sea-girt palaces,
Whose porphyry pillars, and whose costly fronts,
Fraught with the orient spoil of many marbles,
Like altars ranged along the broad canal,
Seem each a trophy of some mighty deed
Rear’d up from out the waters, scarce less strangely
Than those more massy and mysterious giants
Of architecture, those Titanian fabrics,
Which point in Egypt’s plains to times that have
No other record. All is gentle: nought
Stirs rudely; but, congenial with the night,
Whatever walks is gliding like a spirit.
The tinklings of some vigilant guitars
Of sleepless lovers to a wakeful mistress,
And cautious opening of the casement, showing
That he is not unheard; while her young hand,
Fair as the moonlight of which it seems part,
So delicately white, it trembles in
The act of opening the forbidden lattice,
To let in love through music, makes his heart
Thrill like his lyre-strings at the sight; — the dash
Phosphoric of the oar, or rapid twinkle
Of the far lights of skimming gondolas,
And the responsive voices of the choir
Of boatmen answering back with verse for verse;
Some dusky shadow checkering the Rialto;
Some glimmering palace roof, or tapering spire,
Are all the sights and sounds which here pervade
The ocean-born and earth-commanding city —
How sweet and soothing is this hour of calm!
I thank thee, Night! for thou hast chased away
Those horrid bodements which, amidst the throng,
I could not dissipate; and with the blessing
Of thy benign and quiet influence,
Now will I to my couch, although to rest
Is almost wronging such a night as this —
[*A knocking is heard from without.*
Hark! what is that? or who at such a moment?

Enter Antonio.

Ant. My lord, a man without, on urgent business,
Implores to be admitted.
Lioni. Is he a stranger?
Ant. His face is muffled in his cloak, but both
His voice and gestures seem familiar to me;
I craved his name, but this he seem’d reluctant
To trust, save to yourself; most earnestly
He sues to be permitted to approach you.
Lioni. ’T is a strange hour, and a suspicious bearing!
And yet there is slight peril: ’t is not in
Their houses noble men are struck at; still,

Although I know not that I have a foe
In Venice, 't will be wise to use some caution.
Admit him, and retire; but call up quickly
Some of thy fellows, who may wait without. —
Who can this man be ? —
[*Exit* ANTONIO, *and returns with* BERTRAM *muffled.*
Ber. My good lord Lioni,
I have no time to lose, nor thou — dismiss
This menial hence; I would be private with you.
Lioni. It seems the voice of Bertram — go, Antonio. [*Exit* ANTONIO.
Now, stranger, what would you at such an hour ?
Ber. (*discovering himself*). A boon, my noble patron; you have granted
Many to your poor client, Bertram; add
This one, and make him happy.
Lioni. Thou hast known me
From boyhood, ever ready to assist thee
In all fair objects of advancement, which
Beseem one of thy station; I would promise
Ere thy request was heard, but that the hour,
Thy bearing, and this strange and hurried mode
Of suing, gives me to suspect this visit
Hath some mysterious import — but say on —
What has occurred, some rash and sudden broil ?
A cup too much, a scuffle, and a stab ?
Mere things of every day: so that thou hast not
Spilt noble blood, I guarantee thy safety;
But then thou must withdraw, for angry friends
And relatives, in the first burst of vengeance,
Are things in Venice deadlier than the laws.
Ber. My lord, I thank you; but —
Lioni. But what ? You have not
Raised a rash hand against one of our order ?
If so, withdraw and fly, and own it not;
would not slay — but then I must not save thee !
He who has shed patrician blood —
Ber. I come
To save patrician blood, and not to shed it !
And thereunto I must be speedy, for
Each minute lost may lose a life; since Time
Has changed his slow scythe for the two-edged sword,
And is about to take, instead of sand,
The dust from sepulchres to fill his hour-glass ! —
Go not *thou* forth to-morrow !
Lioni. Wherefore not ?
What means this menace ?
Ber. Do not seek its meaning,
But do as I implore thee; — stir not forth,
Whate'er be stirring; though the roar of crowds —
The cry of women, and the shrieks of babes —
The groans of men — the clash of arms — the sound
Of rolling drum, shrill trump, and hollow bell,
Peal in one wide alarum ! — Go not forth
Until the tocsin 's silent, nor even then
Till I return !
Lioni. Again, what does this mean ?
Ber. Again, I tell thee, ask not; but by all
Thou holdest dear on earth or heaven — by all
The souls of thy great fathers, and thy hope
To emulate them, and to leave behind
Descendants worthy both of them and thee —
By all thou hast of bless'd in hope or memory —
By all thou hast to fear here or hereafter —
By all the good deeds thou hast done to me,
Good I would now repay with greater good,
Remain within — trust to thy household gods,
And to my word for safety, if thou dost
As I now counsel — but if not, thou art lost !
Lioni. I am indeed already lost in wonder;
Surely thou ravest ! what have *I* to dread ?
Who are my foes ? or if there be such, *why*
Art *thou* leagued with them ? — *thou !* or if so leagued,
Why comest thou to tell me at this hour,
And not before ?
Ber. I cannot answer this.
Wilt thou go forth despite of this true warning ?
Lioni. I was not born to shrink from idle threats,
The cause of which I know not: at the hour
Of council, be it soon or late, I shall not
Be found among the absent.
Ber. Say not so !
Once more, art thou determined to go forth ?

Lioni. I am. Nor is there aught which shall impede me!
Ber. Then Heaven have mercy on thy soul! — Farewell! [*Going.*
Lioni. Stay — there is more in this than my own safety
Which makes me call thee back; we must not part thus:
Bertram, I have known thee long.
Ber. From childhood, signor,
You have been my protector: in the days
Of reckless infancy, when rank forgets,
Or, rather, is not yet taught to remember
Its cold prerogative, we play'd together;
Our sports, our smiles, our tears, were mingled oft;
My father was your father's client, I
His son's scarce less than foster-brother; years
Saw us together — happy, heart-full hours!
Oh God! the difference 'twixt those hours and this!
Lioni. Bertram, 't is thou who hast forgotten them.
Ber. Nor now, nor ever; whatsoe'er betide,
I would have saved you. When to manhood's growth
We sprung, and you, devoted to the state,
As suits your station, the more humble Bertram
Was left unto the labours of the humble,
Still you forsook me not; and if my fortunes
Have not been towering, 't was no fault of him
Who ofttimes rescued and supported me
When struggling with the tides of circumstance
Which bear away the weaker: noble blood
Ne'er mantled in a nobler heart than thine
Has proved to me, the poor plebeian Bertram.
Would that thy fellow senators were like thee!
Lioni. Why, what hast thou to say against the senate?
Ber. Nothing.
Lioni. I know that there are angry spirits
And turbulent mutterers of stifled treason,
Who lurk in narrow places, and walk out
Muffled to whisper curses to the night;
Disbanded soldiers, discontented ruffians,
And desperate libertines who brawl in taverns;
Thou herdest not with such: 't is true, of late
I have lost sight of thee, but thou wert wont
To lead a temperate life, and break thy bread
With honest mates, and bear a cheerful aspect.
What hath come to thee? in thy hollow eye
And hueless cheek, and thine unquiet motions,
Sorrow and shame and conscience seem at war
To waste thee.
Ber. Rather shame and sorrow light
On the accursèd tyranny which rides
The very air in Venice, and makes men
Madden as in the last hours of the plague
Which sweeps the soul deliriously from life!
Lioni. Some villains have been tampering with thee, Bertram;
This is not thy old language, nor own thoughts;
Some wretch has made thee drunk with disaffection:
But thou must not be lost so; thou *wert* good
And kind, and art not fit for such base acts
As vice and villany would put thee to.
Confess — confide in me — thou know'st my nature —
What is it thou and thine are bound to do,
Which should prevent thy friend, the only son
Of him who was a friend unto thy father,
So that our good-will is a heritage
We should bequeath to our posterity
Such as ourselves received it, or augmented; —
I say, what is it thou must do, that I
Should deem thee dangerous, and keep the house
Like a sick girl?
Ber. Nay, question me no further:
I must be gone.
Lioni. And I be murder'd! — say,
Was it not thus thou saidst, my gentle Bertram?
Ber. Who talks of murder? what said I of murder? —
'T is false! I did not utter such a word.

Lioni. Thou didst not; but from out thy wolfish eye,
So changed from what I knew it, there glares forth
The gladiator. If *my* life 's thine object,
Take it — I am unarm'd, — and then away!
I would not hold my breath on such a tenure
As the capricious mercy of such things
As thou and those who have set thee to thy task-work.
Ber. Sooner than spill thy blood, I peril mine;
Sooner than harm a hair of thine, I place
In jeopardy a thousand heads, and some
As noble, nay, even nobler than thine own.
Lioni. Ay, is it even so? Excuse me, Bertram;
I am not worthy to be singled out
From such exalted hecatombs — who are they
That *are* in danger, and that *make* the danger?
Ber. Venice, and all that she inherits, are
Divided like a house against itself,
And so will perish ere to-morrow's twilight!
Lioni. More mysteries, and awful ones! But now,
Or thou, or I, or both, it may be, are
Upon the verge of ruin; speak once out,
And thou art safe and glorious; for 't is more
Glorious to save than slay, and slay i' the dark too —
Fie, Bertram! that was not a craft for thee!
How would it look to see upon a spear
The head of him whose heart was open to thee
Borne by thy hand before the shuddering people?
And such may be my doom; for here I swear,
Whate'er the peril or the penalty
Of thy denunciation, I go forth,
Unless thou dost detail the cause, and show
The consequence of all which led thee here!
Ber. Is there no way to save thee? minutes fly,
And thou art lost! — *thou!* my sole benefactor,
The only being who was constant to me
Through every change. Yet, make me not a traitor!
Let me save thee — but spare my honour!
Lioni. Where
Can lie the honour in a league of murder?
And who are traitors save unto the state?
Ber. A league is still a compact, and more binding
In honest hearts when words must stand for law;
And in my mind, there is no traitor like
He whose domestic treason plants the poniard
Within the breast which trusted to his truth.
Lioni. And *who* will strike the steel to mine?
Ber. Not I;
I could have wound my soul up to all things
Save this. *Thou* must not die! and think how dear
Thy life is, when I risk so many lives,
Nay, more, the life of lives, the liberty
Of future generations, *not* to be
The assassin thou miscall'st me; — once, once more
I do adjure thee, pass not o'er thy threshold!
Lioni. It is in vain — this moment I go forth.
Ber. Then perish Venice rather than my friend!
I will disclose — ensnare — betray — destroy —
Oh, what a villain I become for thee!
Lioni. Say, rather thy friend's saviour and the state's!
Speak — pause not — all rewards, all pledges for
Thy safety and thy welfare; wealth such as
The state accords her worthiest servants; nay,
Nobility itself I guarantee thee,
So that thou art sincere and penitent.
Ber. I have thought again: it must not be — I love thee —
Thou knowest it — that I stand here is the proof,
Not least though last; but having done my duty
By thee, I now must do it by my country!
Farewell — we meet no more in life! — farewell!

Lioni. What, ho! — Antonio — Pedro — to the door!
See that none pass — arrest this man!

Enter Antonio *and other armed Domestics, who seize* Bertram.

Lioni (*continues*). Take care
He hath no harm; bring me my sword and cloak,
And man the gondola with four oars — quick — [*Exit* Antonio.
We will unto Giovanni Gradenigo's,
And send for Marc Cornaro: — fear not, Bertram;
This needful violence is for thy safety,
No less than for the general weal.
Ber. Where wouldst thou
Bear me a prisoner?
Lioni. Firstly to 'the Ten:'
Next to the Doge.
Ber. To the Doge?
Lioni. Assuredly:
Is he not chief of the state?
Ber. Perhaps at sunrise —
Lioni. What mean you? — but we'll know anon.
Ber. Art sure?
Lioni. Sure as all gentle means can make; and if
They fail, you know 'the Ten' and their tribunal,
And that Saint Mark's has dungeons, and the dungeons
A rack.
Ber. Apply it then before the dawn
Now hastening into heaven. — One more such word,
And you shall perish piecemeal, by the death
You think to doom to me.

Re-enter Antonio.

Ant. The bark is ready,
My lord, and all prepared.
Lioni. Look to the prisoner.
Bertram, I'll reason with thee as we go
To the Magnifico's, sage Gradenigo. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II

The Ducal Palace. — The Doge's Apartment.

The Doge *and his nephew* Bertuccio Faliero.

Doge. Are all the people of our house in muster?
Ber. F. They are array'd, and eager for the signal,
Within our palace precincts at San Polo.
I come for your last orders.
Doge. It had been
As well had there been time to have got together,
From my own fief, Val di Marino, more
Of our retainers — but it is too late.
Ber. F. Methinks, my lord, 't is better as it is:
A sudden swelling of our retinue
Had waked suspicion; and, though fierce and trusty,
The vassals of that district are too rude
And quick in quarrel to have long maintain'd
The secret discipline we need for such
A service, till our foes are dealt upon.
Doge. True; but when once the signal has been given
These are the men for such an enterprise;
These city slaves have all their private bias,
Their prejudice *against* or *for* this noble,
Which may induce them to o'erdo or spare
Where mercy may be madness; the fierce peasants,
Serfs of my county of Val di Marino,
Would do the bidding of their lord without
Distinguishing for love or hate his foes;
Alike to them Marcello or Cornaro,
A Gradenigo or a Foscari;
They are not used to start at those vain names,
Nor bow the knee before a civic senate;
A chief in armour is their Suzerain,
And not a thing in robes.
Ber. F. We are enough;
And for the dispositions of our clients
Against the senate I will answer.
Doge. Well,
The die is thrown; but for a warlike service,
Done in the field, commend me to my peasants.
They made the sun shine through the host of Huns,
When sallow burghers slunk back to their tents
And cower'd to hear their own victorious trumpet.
If there be small resistance, you will find
These citizens all lions, like their standard;
But if there's much to do, you'll wish, with me,
A band of iron rustics at our backs.

Ber. F. Thus thinking, I must marvel you resolve
To strike the blow so suddenly.
Doge. Such blows
Must be struck suddenly or never. When
I had o'ermaster'd the weak false remorse
Which yearn'd about my heart, too fondly yielding
A moment to the feelings of old days,
I was most fain to strike; and, firstly, that
I might not yield again to such emotions;
And, secondly, because of all these men,
Save Israel and Philip Calendaro,
I know not well the courage or the faith:
To-day might find 'mongst them a traitor to us,
As yesterday a thousand to the senate;
But once in with their hilts hot in their hands,
They must *on* for their own sakes; one stroke struck,
And the mere instinct of the first-born Cain,
Which ever lurks somewhere in human hearts
Though circumstance may keep it in abeyance,
Will urge the rest on like to wolves; the sight
Of blood to crowds begets the thirst of more,
As the first wine-cup leads to the long revel;
And you will find a harder task to quell
Than urge them when they *have* commenced, but *till*
That moment, a mere voice, a straw, a shadow,
Are capable of turning them aside. —
How goes the night?
Ber. F. Almost upon the dawn.
Doge. Then it is time to strike upon the bell.
Are the men posted?
Ber. F. By this time they are;
But they have orders not to strike, until
They have command from you through me in person.
Doge. 'T is well. — Will the morn never put to rest
These stars which twinkle yet o'er all the heavens?
I am settled and bound up, and being so,
The very effort which it cost me to
Resolve to cleanse this commonwealth with fire,
Now leaves my mind more steady. I have wept,
And trembled at the thought of this dread duty;
But now I have put down all idle passion,
And look the growing tempest in the face,
As doth the pilot of an admiral galley.
Yet (wouldst thou think it, kinsman?) it hath been
A greater struggle to me, than when nations
Beheld their fate merged in the approaching fight,
Where I was leader of a phalanx, where
Thousands were sure to perish. — Yes, to spill
The rank polluted current from the veins
Of a few bloated despots needed more
To steel me to a purpose such as made
Timoleon immortal, than to face
The toils and dangers of a life of war.
Ber. F. It gladdens me to see your former wisdom
Subdue the furies which so wrung you ere
You were decided.
Doge. It was ever thus
With me; the hour of agitation came
In the first glimmerings of a purpose, when
Passion had too much room to sway; but in
The hour of action I have stood as calm
As were the dead who lay around me: this
They knew who made me what I am, and trusted
To the subduing power which I preserved
Over my mood, when its first burst was spent.
But they were not aware that there are things
Which make revenge a virtue by reflection,
And not an impulse of mere anger; though
The laws sleep, justice wakes, and injured souls
Oft do a public right with private wrong,
And justify their deeds unto themselves. —
Methinks the day breaks — is it not so? look,
Thine eyes are clear with youth; — the air puts on
A morning freshness, and, at least to me,
The sea looks greyer through the lattice.
Ber. F. True,
The morn is dappling in the sky.
Doge. Away then!
See that they strike without delay, and with

The first toll from St. Mark's, march on the palace
With all our house's strength: here I will meet you —
The Sixteen and their companies will move
In separate columns at the self-same moment —
Be sure you post yourself at the great gate:
I would not trust 'the Ten,' except to us —
The rest, the rabble of patricians, may
Glut the more careless swords of those leagued with us.
Remember that the cry is still 'Saint Mark!
The Genoese are come — ho! to the rescue!
Saint Mark and Liberty!' — Now — now to action!

Ber. F. Farewell then, noble uncle! we will meet
In freedom and true sovereignty, or never!

Doge. Come hither, my Bertuccio — one embrace —
Speed, for the day grows broader. Send me soon
A messenger to tell me how all goes
When you rejoin our troops, and then sound — sound
The storm-bell from Saint Mark's!

[*Exit* Bertuccio Faliero.

Doge (*solus*). He is gone,
And on each footstep moves a life. — 'T is done.
Now the destroying Angel hovers o'er
Venice, and pauses ere he pours the vial,
Even as the eagle overlooks his prey,
And for a moment, poised in middle air,
Suspends the motion of his mighty wings,
Then swoops with his unerring beak. — Thou day!
That slowly walk'st the waters! march — march on —
I would not smite i' the dark, but rather see
That no stroke errs. And you, ye blue sea-waves!
I have seen you dyed ere now, and deeply too,
With Genoese, Saracen, and Hunnish gore,
While that of Venice flow'd too, but victorious:
Now thou must wear an unmix'd crimson; no
Barbaric blood can reconcile us now
Unto that horrible incarnadine,
But friend or foe will roll in civic slaughter.
And have I lived to fourscore years for this?
I, who was named Preserver of the City?
I, at whose name the million's caps were flung
Into the air, and cries from tens of thousands
Rose up, imploring Heaven to send me blessings,
And fame, and length of days — to see this day?
But this day, black within the calendar,
Shall be succeeded by a bright millennium.
Doge Dandolo survived to ninety summers
To vanquish empires, and refuse their crown;
I will resign a crown, and make the state
Renew its freedom — but oh! by what means?
The noble end must justify them. What
Are a few drops of human blood? 't is false,
The blood of tyrants is not human; they,
Like to incarnate Molochs, feed on ours,
Until 't is time to give them to the tombs
Which they have made so populous. — Oh world!
Oh men! what are ye, and our best designs,
That we must work by crime to punish crime?
And slay as if Death had but this one gate,
When a few years would make the sword superfluous?
And I, upon the verge of th' unknown realm,
Yet send so many heralds on before me? —
I must not ponder this. [*A pause.*
Hark! was there not
A murmur as of distant voices, and
The tramp of feet in martial unison?
What phantoms even of sound our wishes raise!
It cannot be — the signal hath not rung —
Why pauses it? My nephew's messenger
Should be upon his way to me, and he
Himself perhaps even now draws grating back
Upon its ponderous hinge the steep tower portal,
Where swings the sullen huge oracular bell,
Which never knells but for a princely death,
Or for a state in peril, pealing forth
Tremendous bodements; let it do its office,

And be this peal its awfullest and last
Sound till the strong tower rock! — What! silent still?
I would go forth, but that my post is here,
To be the centre of re-union to
The oft discordant elements which form
Leagues of this nature, and to keep compact
The wavering of the weak, in case of conflict;
For if they should do battle, 't will be here,
Within the palace, that the strife will thicken:
Then here must be my station, as becomes
The master-mover. — Hark! he comes — he comes,
My nephew, brave Bertuccio's messenger. —
What tidings? Is he marching? hath he sped? —
They here! all 's lost — yet will I make an effort.

Enter a Signor of the Night, *with Guards, etc., etc.*

Sig. Doge, I arrest thee of high treason!
Doge. Me!
Thy prince, of treason? — Who are they that dare
Cloak their own treason under such an order?
Sig. (*showing his order*). Behold my order from the assembled Ten.
Doge. And *where* are they, and *why* assembled? no
Such council can be lawful, till the prince
Preside there, and that duty 's mine: on thine
I charge thee, give me way, or marshal me
To the council chamber.
Sig. Duke! it may not be:
Nor are they in the wonted Hall of Council,
But sitting in the convent of Saint Saviour's.
Doge. You dare to disobey me, then?
Sig. I serve
The state, and needs must serve it faithfully;
My warrant is the will of those who rule it.
Doge. And till that warrant has my signature
It is illegal, and, as *now* applied,
Rebellious. Hast thou weigh'd well thy life's worth,
That thus you dare assume a lawless function?
Sig. 'T is not my office to reply, but act —
I am placed here as guard upon thy person,
And not as judge to hear or to decide.
Doge (*aside*). I must gain time; so that the storm-bell sound
All may be well yet. — Kinsman, speed — speed — speed!
Our fate is trembling in the balance, and
Woe to the vanquish'd! be they prince and people,
Or slaves and senate —
[*The great bell of Saint Mark's tolls.*
Lo! it sounds — it tolls!
(*Aloud.*) Hark, Signor of the Night! and you, ye hirelings,
Who wield your mercenary staves in fear,
It is your knell. — Swell on, thou lusty peal!
Now, knaves, what ransom for your lives?
Sig. Confusion!
Stand to your arms, and guard the door — all 's lost
Unless that fearful bell be silenced soon.
The officer hath miss'd his path or purpose,
Or met some unforeseen and hideous obstacle.
Anselmo, with thy company proceed
Straight to the tower; the rest remain with me. [*Exit part of the Guard.*
Doge. Wretch! if thou wouldst have thy vile life, implore it;
It is not now a lease of sixty seconds.
Ay, send thy miserable ruffians forth;
They never shall return.
Sig. So let it be!
They die then in their duty, as will I.
Doge. Fool! the high eagle flies at nobler game
Than thou and thy base myrmidons, — live on,
So thou provok'st not peril by resistance,
And learn (if souls so much obscured can bear
To gaze upon the sunbeams) to be free.
Sig. And learn thou to be captive. — It hath ceased, [*The bell ceases to toll.*
The traitorous signal, which was to have set
The bloodhound mob on their patrician prey —
The knell hath rung, but it is not the senate's!
Doge (*after a pause*). All 's silent, and all 's lost!

Sig. Now, Doge, denounce me
As rebel slave of a revolted council!
Have I not done my duty?
Doge. Peace, thou thing!
Thou hast done a worthy deed, and earn'd the price
Of blood, and they who use thee will reward thee.
But thou wert sent to watch and not to prate,
As thou saidst even now — then do thine office,
But let it be in silence, as behooves thee,
Since, though thy prisoner, I am thy prince.
Sig. I did not mean to fail in the respect
Due to your rank: in this I shall obey you.
Doge (*aside*). There now is nothing left me save to die;
And yet how near success! I would have fallen,
And proudly, in the hour of triumph, but
To miss it thus! —

Enter other SIGNORS OF THE NIGHT, *with* BERTUCCIO FALIERO *prisoner*.

2d Sig. We took him in the act
Of issuing from the tower, where, at his order,
As delegated from the Doge, the signal
Had thus begun to sound.
1st Sig. Are all the passes
Which lead up to the palace well secured?
2d Sig. They are — besides, it matters not; the chiefs
Are all in chains, and some even now on trial;
Their followers are dispersed, and many taken.
Ber. F. Uncle!
Doge. It is in vain to war with Fortune;
The glory hath departed from our house.
Ber. F. Who would have deem'd it? — Ah! one moment sooner!
Doge. That moment would have changed the face of ages;
This gives us to eternity. We'll meet it
As men whose triumph is not in success,
But who can make their own minds all in all,
Equal to every fortune. Droop not, 't is
But a brief passage — I would go alone,
Yet if they send us, as 't is like, together,
Let us go worthy of our sires and selves.
Ber. F. I shall not shame you, uncle.
1st Sig. Lords, our orders
Are to keep guard on both in separate chambers,
Until the council call ye to your trial.
Doge. Our trial! will they keep their mockery up
Even to the last? but let them deal upon us,
As we had dealt on them, but with less pomp.
'T is but a game of mutual homicides,
Who have cast lots for the first death, and they
Have won with false dice. — Who hath been our Judas?
1st Sig. I am not warranted to answer that.
Ber. F. I'll answer for thee — 't is a certain Bertram,
Even now deposing to the secret giunta.
Doge. Bertram, the Bergamask! With what vile tools
We operate to slay or save! This creature,
Black with a double treason, now will earn
Rewards and honours, and be stamp'd in story
With the geese in the Capitol, which gabbled
Till Rome awoke, and had an annual triumph,
While Manlius, who hurl'd down the Gauls, was cast
From the Tarpeian.
1st Sig. He aspired to treason,
And sought to rule the state.
Doge. He saved the state,
And sought but to reform what he revived —
But this is idle. Come, sirs, do your work.
1st Sig. Noble Bertuccio, we must now remove you
Into an inner chamber.
Ber. F. Farewell, uncle!
If we shall meet again in life I know not,
But they perhaps will let our ashes mingle.
Doge. Yes, and our spirits, which shall yet go forth,
And do what our frail clay, thus clogg'd, hath fail'd in!
They cannot quench the memory of those
Who would have hurl'd them from their guilty thrones,
And such examples will find heirs, though distant.

ACT V

SCENE I

The Hall of the Council of Ten assembled with the additional Senators, who, on the Trials of the Conspirators for the Treason of MARINO FALIERO, *composed what was called the Giunta,* — *Guards, Officers, etc., etc.* — ISRAEL BERTUCCIO *and* PHILIP CALENDARO *as Prisoners.* — BERTRAM, LIONI, *and Witnesses, etc.*

The Chief of the Ten, BENINTENDE.

Ben. There now rests, after such conviction of
Their manifold and manifest offences,
But to pronounce on these obdurate men
The sentence of the law, — a grievous task
To those who hear, and those who speak. Alas!
That it should fall to me! and that my days
Of office should be stigmatised through all
The years of coming time, as bearing record
To this most foul and complicated treason
Against a just and free state, known to all
The earth as being the Christian bulwark 'gainst
The Saracen and the schismatic Greek,
The savage Hun, and not less barbarous Frank;
A city which has open'd India's wealth
To Europe; the last Roman refuge from
O'erwhelming Attila; the ocean's queen;
Proud Genoa's prouder rival! 'T is to sap
The throne of such a city, these lost men
Have risk'd and forfeited their worthless lives —
So let them die the death.
I. Ber. We are prepared;
Your racks have done that for us. Let us die.
Ben. If ye have that to say which would obtain
Abatement of your punishment, the Giunta
Will hear you; if you have aught to confess,
Now is your time, perhaps it may avail ye.
I. Ber. We stand to hear, and not to speak.
Ben. Your crimes
Are fully proved by your accomplices,
And all which circumstance can add to aid them;
Yet we would hear from your own lips complete
Avowal of your treason: on the verge
Of that dread gulf which none repass, the truth
Alone can profit you on earth or heaven —
Say, then, what was your motive?
I. Ber. Justice!
Ben. What
Your object?
I. Ber. Freedom!
Ben. You are brief, sir.
I. Ber. So my life grows: I
Was bred a soldier, not a senator.
Ben. Perhaps you think by this blunt brevity
To brave your judges to postpone the sentence?
I. Ber. Do you be brief as I am, and believe me,
I shall prefer that mercy to your pardon.
Ben. Is this your sole reply to the tribunal?
I. Ber. Go, ask your racks what they have wrung from us,
Or place us there again; we have still some blood left,
And some slight sense of pain in these wrench'd limbs:
But this ye dare not do; for if we die there —
And you have left us little life to spend
Upon your engines, gorged with pangs already —
Ye lose the public spectacle, with which
You would appal your slaves to further slavery!
Groans are not words, nor agony assent,
Nor affirmation truth, if nature's sense
Should overcome the soul into a lie,
For a short respite — must we bear or die?
Ben. Say, who were your accomplices?
I. Ber. The Senate!
Ben. What do you mean?
I. Ber. Ask of the suffering people,
Whom your patrician crimes have driven to crime.
Ben. You know the Doge?
I. Ber. I served with him at Zara
In the field, when *you* were pleading here your way
To present office; we exposed our lives,
While you but hazarded the lives of others,
Alike by accusation or defence;
And, for the rest, all Venice knows her Doge,
Through his great actions and the Senate's insults.
Ben. You have held conference with him?
I. Ber. I am weary —

Even wearier of your questions than your tortures;
I pray you pass to judgment.
Ben. It is coming. —
And you, too, Philip Calendaro, what
Have you to say why you should not be doom'd?
Cal. I never was a man of many words,
And now have few left worth the utterance.
Ben. A further application of yon engine
May change your tone.
Cal. Most true, it *will* do so;
A former application did so; but
It will not change my words, or, if it did —
Ben. What then?
Cal. Will my avowal on yon rack
Stand good in law?
Ben. Assuredly.
Cal. Whoe'er
The culprit be whom I accuse of treason?
Ben. Without doubt, he will be brought up to trial.
Cal. And on this testimony would he perish?
Ben. So your confession be detail'd and full,
He will stand here in peril of his life.
Cal. Then look well to thy proud self, President!
For by the eternity which yawns before me,
I swear that *thou*, and only thou, shalt be
The traitor I denounce upon that rack,
If I be stretch'd there for the second time.
One of the Giunta. Lord President, 't were best proceed to judgment;
There is no more to be drawn from these men.
Ben. Unhappy men! prepare for instant death.
The nature of your crime — our law — and peril
The state now stands in, leave not an hour's respite.
Guards! lead them forth, and upon the balcony
Of the red columns, where, on festal Thursday,
The Doge stands to behold the chase of bulls,
Let them be justified: and leave exposed
Their wavering relics, in the place of judgment,
To the full view of the assembled people!
And Heaven have mercy on their souls!
The Giunta. Amen!
I Ber. Signors, farewell! we shall not all again
Meet in one place.
Ben. And lest they should essay
To stir up the distracted multitude —
Guards! let their mouths be gagg'd, even in the act
Of execution. Lead them hence!
Cal. What! must we
Not even say farewell to some fond friend,
Nor leave a last word with our confessor?
Ben. A priest is waiting in the antechamber;
But, for your friends, such interviews would be
Painful to them, and useless all to you.
Cal. I knew that we were gagg'd in life; at least
All those who had not heart to risk their lives
Upon their open thoughts; but still I deem'd
That in the last few moments, the same idle
Freedom of speech accorded to the dying
Would not now be denied to us; but since —
I. Ber. Even let them have their way, brave Calendaro!
What matter a few syllables? let's die
Without the slightest show of favour from them;
So shall our blood more readily arise
To Heaven against them, and more testify
To their atrocities, than could a volume
Spoken or written of our dying words!
They tremble at our voices — nay, they dread
Our very silence — let them live in fear!
Leave them unto their thoughts, and let us now
Address our own above! — Lead on, we are ready.
Cal. Israel, hadst thou but hearken'd unto me
It had not now been thus; and yon pale villain,
The coward Bertram, would —
I. Ber. Peace, Calendaro!
What brooks it now to ponder upon this?
Ber. Alas! I fain you died in peace with me:
I did not seek this task; 't was forced upon me:
Say, you forgive me; though I never can
Retrieve my own forgiveness — frown not thus!

I. Ber. I die and pardon thee!
Cal. (*spitting at him*). I die and scorn thee!

[*Exeunt* ISRAEL BERTUCCIO *and* PHILIP CALENDARO, *Guards, etc.*

Ben. Now that these criminals have been disposed of,
'T is time that we proceed to pass our sentence
Upon the greatest traitor upon record
In any annals, the Doge Faliero!
The proofs and process are complete; the time
And crime require a quick procedure; shall
He now be call'd in to receive the award?
The Giunta. Ay, ay.
Ben. Avogadori, order that the Doge
Be brought before the council.
One of the Giunta. And the rest,
When shall they be brought up?
Ben. When all the chiefs
Have been disposed of. Some have fled to Chiozza;
But there are thousands in pursuit of them,
And such precaution ta'en on terra firma,
As well as in the islands, that we hope
None will escape to utter in strange lands
His libellous tale of treasons 'gainst the senate.

Enter the DOGE *as Prisoner, with Guards, etc., etc.*

Ben. Doge — for such still you are, and by the law
Must be consider'd, till the hour shall come
When you must doff the ducal bonnet from
That head, which could not wear a crown more noble
Than empires can confer, in quiet honour,
But it must plot to overthrow your peers,
Who made you what you are, and quench in blood
A city's glory — we have laid already
Before you in your chamber at full length,
By the Avogadori, all the proofs
Which have appear'd against you; and more ample
Ne'er rear'd their sanguinary shadows to
Confront a traitor. What have you to say
In your defence?
Doge. What shall I say to ye,
Since my defence must be your condemnation?
You are at once offenders and accusers,
Judges and executioners! — Proceed
Upon your power.
Ben. Your chief accomplices
Having confess'd, there is no hope for you.
Doge. And who be they?
Ben. In number many; but
The first now stands before you in the court,
Bertram, of Bergamo, — would you question him?
Doge (*looking at him contemptuously*). No.
Ben. And two others, Israel Bertuccio,
And Philip Calendaro, have admitted
Their fellowship in treason with the Doge!
Doge. And where are they?
Ben. Gone to their place, and now
Answering to Heaven for what they did on earth.
Doge. Ah! the plebeian Brutus, is he gone?
And the quick Cassius of the Arsenal?
How did they meet their doom?
Ben. Think of your own:
It is approaching. You decline to plead, then?
Doge. I cannot plead to my inferiors, nor
Can recognise your legal power to try me.
Show me the law!
Ben. On great emergencies,
The law must be remodell'd or amended.
Our fathers had not fix'd the punishment
Of such a crime, as on the old Roman tables
The sentence against parricide was left
In pure forgetfulness; they could not render
That penal, which had neither name nor thought
In their great bosoms. Who would have foreseen
That nature could be filed to such a crime
As sons 'gainst sires, and princes 'gainst their realms?
Your sin hath made us make a law which will
Become a precedent 'gainst such haught traitors,
As would with treason mount to tyranny;
Not even contented with a sceptre, till
They can convert it to a two-edged sword!
Was not the place of Doge sufficient for ye?
What 's nobler than the signory of Venice?
Doge. The signory of Venice! You betray'd me —
You — *you*, who sit there, traitors as ye are!
From my equality with you in birth,
And my superiority in action,

You drew me from my honourable toils,
In distant lands — on flood, in field, in cities —
You singled me out like a victim to
Stand crown'd, but bound and helpless, at the altar
Where you alone could minister. I knew not,
I sought not, wish'd not, dream'd not the election
Which reach'd me first at Rome, and I obey'd;
But found on my arrival, that, besides
The jealous vigilance which always led you
To mock and mar your sovereign's best intents,
You had, even in the interregnum of
My journey to the capital, curtail'd
And mutilated the few privileges
Yet left the duke. All this I bore, and would
Have borne, until my very hearth was stain'd
By the pollution of your ribaldry,
And he, the ribald, whom I see amongst you —
Fit judge in such tribunal! —
Ben. (*interrupting him*). Michel Steno
Is here in virtue of his office, as
One of the Forty; 'the Ten' having craved
A Giunta of patricians from the senate
To aid our judgment in a trial arduous
And novel as the present: he was set
Free from the penalty pronounced upon him,
Because the Doge, who should protect the law,
Seeking to abrogate all law, can claim
No punishment of others by the statutes
Which he himself denies and violates!
Doge. His PUNISHMENT! I rather see him *there*,
Where he now sits, to glut him with my death,
Than in the mockery of castigation,
Which your foul, outward, juggling show of justice
Decreed as sentence! Base as was his crime,
'T was purity compared with your protection.
Ben. And can it be, that the great Doge of Venice,
With three parts of a century of years
And honours on his head, could thus allow
His fury, like an angry boy's, to master
All feeling, wisdom, faith, and fear, on such
A provocation as a young man's petulance?
Doge. A spark creates the flame — 't is the last drop
Which makes the cup run o'er, and mine was full
Already. You oppress'd the prince and people;
I would have freed both, and have fail'd in both.
The price of such success would have been glory,
Vengeance, and victory, and such a name
As would have made Venetian history
Rival to that of Greece and Syracuse
When they were freed, and flourish'd ages after,
And mine to Gelon and to Thrasybulus:
Failing, I know the penalty of failure
Is present infamy and death — the future
Will judge, when Venice is no more, or free;
Till then, the truth is in abeyance. Pause not;
I would have shown no mercy, and I seek none;
My life was staked upon a mighty hazard,
And being lost, take what I would have taken!
I would have stood alone amidst your tombs:
Now you may flock round mine, and trample on it,
As you have done upon my heart while living.
Ben. You do confess then, and admit the justice
Of our tribunal?
Doge. I confess to have fail'd;
Fortune is female: from my youth her favours
Were not withheld, the fault was mine to hope
Her former smiles again at this late hour.
Ben. You do not then in aught arraign our equity?
Doge. Noble Venetians! stir me not with questions.
I am resign'd to the worst; but in me still
Have something of the blood of brighter days,
And am not over-patient. Pray you, spare me
Further interrogation, which boots nothing,

Except to turn a trial to debate.
I shall but answer that which will offend you,
And please your enemies — a host already.
'T is true, these sullen walls should yield no echo:
But walls have ears — nay, more, they have tongues; and if
There were no other way for truth to o'erleap them,
You who condemn me, you who fear and slay me,
Yet could not bear in silence to your graves
What you would hear from me of good or evil;
The secret were too mighty for your souls:
Then let it sleep in mine, unless you court
A danger which would double that you escape.
Such my defence would be, had I full scope
To make it famous; for true *words* are *things*,
And dying men's are things which long outlive,
And oftentimes avenge them; bury mine,
If ye would fain survive me. Take this counsel,
And though too oft ye made me live in wrath,
Let me die calmly; you may grant me this;
I deny nothing — defend nothing — nothing
I ask of you, but silence for myself,
And sentence from the court!
Ben. This full admission
Spares us the harsh necessity of ordering
The torture to elicit the whole truth.
Doge. The torture! you have put me there already,
Daily since I was Doge; but if you will
Add the corporeal rack, you may: these limbs
Will yield with age to crushing iron; but
There 's that within my heart shall strain your engines.

Enter an Officer.

Officer. Noble Venetians! Duchess Faliero
Requests admission to the Giunta's presence.
Ben. Say, conscript fathers, shall she be admitted?
One of the Giunta. She may have revelations of importance
Unto the state, to justify compliance
With her request.
Ben. Is this the general will?
All. It is.
Doge. Oh, admirable laws of Venice!
Which would admit the wife, in the full hope
That she might testify against the husband.
What glory to the chaste Venetian dames!
But such blasphemers 'gainst all honour, as
Sit here, do well to act in their vocation.
Now, villain Steno! if this woman fail,
I 'll pardon thee thy lie, and thy escape,
And my own violent death, and thy vile life.

The Duchess *enters.*

Ben. Lady! this just tribunal has resolved,
Though the request be strange, to grant it, and
Whatever be its purport, to accord
A patient hearing with the due respect
Which fits your ancestry, your rank, and virtues:
But you turn pale — ho, there! look to the lady!
Place a chair instantly.
Ang. A moment's faintness —
'T is past; I pray you pardon me, — I sit not
In presence of my prince and of my husband,
While he is on his feet.
Ben. Your pleasure, lady?
Ang. Strange rumours, but most true, if all I hear
And see be sooth, have reach'd me, and I come
To know the worst, even at the worst; forgive
The abruptness of my entrance and my bearing.
Is it — I cannot speak — I cannot shape
The question — but you answer it ere spoken,
With eyes averted, and with gloomy brows —
Oh God! this is the silence of the grave!
Ben. (*after a pause*). Spare us, and spare thyself the repetition
Of our most awful, but inexorable
Duty to heaven and man!
Ang. Yet speak; I cannot —

I cannot — no — even now believe these things.
Is *he* condemn'd?
Ben. Alas!
Ang. And was he guilty?
Ben. Lady! the natural distraction of
Thy thoughts at such a moment makes the question
Merit forgiveness; else a doubt like this
Against a just and paramount tribunal
Were deep offence. But question even the Doge,
And if he can deny the proofs, believe him
Guiltless as thy own bosom.
Ang. Is it so?
My lord — my sovereign — my poor father's friend —
The mighty in the field, the sage in council;
Unsay the words of this man! Thou art silent!
Ben. He hath already own'd to his own guilt,
Nor, as thou seest, doth he deny it now.
Ang. Ay, but he must not die! Spare his few years,
Which grief and shame will soon cut down to days!
One day of baffled crime must not efface
Near sixteen lustres crowded with brave acts.
Ben. His doom must be fulfill'd without remission
Of time or penalty — 't is a decree.
Ang. He hath been guilty, but there may be mercy.
Ben. Not in this case with justice.
Ang. Alas! signor,
He who is only just is cruel; who
Upon the earth would live were all judged justly?
Ben. His punishment is safety to the state.
Ang. He was a subject, and hath served the state;
He was your general, and hath saved the state;
He is your sovereign, and hath ruled the state.
One of the Council. He is a traitor, and betray'd the state.
Ang. And, but for him, there now had been no state
To save or to destroy; and you, who sit
There to pronounce the death of your deliverer,
Had now been groaning at a Moslem oar,
Or digging in the Hunnish mines in fetters!
One of the Council. No, lady, there are others who would die
Rather than breathe in slavery!
Ang. If there are so
Within *these* walls, *thou* art not of the number:
The truly brave are generous to the fallen! —
Is there no hope?
Ben. Lady, it cannot be.
Ang. (*turning to the Doge*). Then die, Faliero! since it must be so;
But with the spirit of my father's friend.
Thou hast been guilty of a great offence,
Half-cancell'd by the harshness of these men.
I would have sued to them, have pray'd to them,
Have begg'd as famish'd mendicants for bread,
Have wept as they will cry unto their God
For mercy, and be answer'd as they answer —
Had it been fitting for thy name or mine,
And if the cruelty in their cold eyes
Had not announced the heartless wrath within.
Then, as a prince, address thee to thy doom!
Doge. I have lived too long not to know how to die!
Thy suing to these men were but the bleating
Of the lamb to the butcher, or the cry
Of seamen to the surge. I would not take
A life eternal, granted at the hands
Of wretches, from whose monstrous villanies
I sought to free the groaning nations!
Michel Steno. Doge,
A word with thee, and with this noble lady,
Whom I have grievously offended. Would
Sorrow, or shame, or penance on my part,
Could cancel the inexorable past!
But since that cannot be, as Christians let us
Say farewell, and in peace: with full contrition
I crave, not pardon, but compassion from you,
And give, however weak, my prayers for both.

Ang. Sage Benintende, now chief judge of Venice,
I speak to thee in answer to yon signor.
Inform the ribald Steno, that his words
Ne'er weigh'd in mind with Loredano's daughter
Further than to create a moment's pity
For such as he is: would that others had
Despised him as I pity! I prefer
My honour to a thousand lives, could such
Be multiplied in mine, but would not have
A single life of others lost for that
Which nothing human can impugn — the sense
Of virtue, looking not to what is call'd
A good name for reward, but to itself.
To me the scorner's words were as the wind
Unto the rock: but as there are — alas!
Spirits more sensitive, on which such things
Light as the whirlwind on the waters; souls
To whom dishonour's shadow is a substance
More terrible than death, here and hereafter;
Men whose vice is to start at vice's scoffing,
And who, though proof against all blandishments
Of pleasure, and all pangs of pain, are feeble
When the proud name on which they pinnacled
Their hopes is breathed on, jealous as the eagle
Of her high aiery; let what we now
Behold, and feel, and suffer, be a lesson
To wretches how they tamper in their spleen
With beings of a higher order. Insects
Have made the lion mad ere now; a shaft
I' the heel o'erthrew the bravest of the brave;
A wife's dishonour was the bane of Troy;
A wife's dishonour unking'd Rome for ever;
An injured husband brought the Gauls to Clusium,
And thence to Rome, which perish'd for a time;
An obscene gesture cost Caligula
His life, while earth yet bore his cruelties;
A virgin's wrong made Spain a Moorish province;
And Steno's lie, couch'd in two worthless lines,
Hath decimated Venice, put in peril
A senate which hath stood eight hundred years,
Discrown'd a prince, cut off his crownless head,
And forged new fetters for a groaning people!
Let the poor wretch, like to the courtesan
Who fired Persepolis, be proud of this,
If it so please him — 't were a pride fit for him!
But let him not insult the last hours of
Him, who, whate'er he now is, *was* a hero,
By the intrusion of his very prayers.
Nothing of good can come from such a source,
Nor would we aught with him, nor now, nor ever:
We leave him to himself, that lowest depth
Of human baseness. Pardon is for men,
And not for reptiles — we have none for Steno,
And no resentment: things like him must sting,
And higher beings suffer; 't is the charter
Of life. The man who dies by the adder's fang
May have the crawler crush'd, but feels no anger:
'T was the worm's nature; and some men are worms
In soul, more than the living things of tombs.

Doge (*to Ben.*). Signor! complete that which you deem your duty.

Ben. Before we can proceed upon that duty,
We would request the princess to withdraw;
'T will move her too much to be witness to it.

Ang. I know it will, and yet I must endure it,
For 't is a part of mine — I will not quit,
Except by force, my husband's side. — Proceed!
Nay, fear not either shriek, or sigh, or tear;
Though my heart burst, it shall be silent. — Speak!
I have that within which shall o'ermaster all.

Ben. Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice,
Count of Val di Marino, Senator,
And some time General of the Fleet and Army,
Noble Venetian, many times and oft
Intrusted by the state with high employments,
Even to the highest, listen to the sentence.

Convict by many witnesses and proofs,
And by thine own confession, of the guilt
Of treachery and treason yet unheard of
Until this trial — the decree is death.
Thy goods are confiscate unto the state,
Thy name is razed from out her records, save
Upon a public day of thanksgiving
For this our most miraculous deliverance,
When thou art noted in our calendars
With earthquakes, pestilence, and foreign foes,
And the great enemy of man, as subject
Of grateful masses for Heaven's grace in snatching
Our lives and country from thy wickedness.
The place wherein as Doge thou shouldst be painted,
With thine illustrious predecessors, is
To be left vacant, with a death-black veil
Flung over these dim words engraved beneath, —
'This place is of Marino Faliero,
Decapitated for his crimes.'
Doge. 'His crimes!'
But let it be so: — it will be in vain.
The veil which blackens o'er this blighted name,
And hides, or seems to hide, these lineaments,
Shall draw more gazers than the thousand portraits
Which glitter round it in their pictured trappings —
Your delegated slaves — the people's tyrants!
'Decapitated for his crimes!' — *What* crimes?
Were it not better to record the facts,
So that the contemplator might approve,
Or at the least learn *whence* the crimes arose?
When the beholder knows a Doge conspired,
Let him be told the cause — it is your history.
Ben. Time must reply to that; our sons will judge
Their fathers' judgment, which I now pronounce.
As Doge, clad in the ducal robes and cap,
Thou shalt be led hence to the Giants' Staircase,
Where thou and all our princes are invested;
And there, the ducal crown being first resumed
Upon the spot where it was first assumed,
Thy head shall be struck off; and Heaven have mercy
Upon thy soul!
Doge. Is this the Giunta's sentence?
Ben. It is.
Doge. I can endure it. — And the time?
Ben. Must be immediate. — Make thy peace with God:
Within an hour thou must be in His presence.
Doge. I am already; and my blood will rise
To Heaven before the souls of those who shed it. —
Are all my lands confiscated?
Ben. They are;
And goods, and jewels, and all kind of treasure,
Except two thousand ducats — these dispose of.
Doge. That's harsh. — I would have fain reserved the lands
Near to Treviso, which I hold by investment
From Laurence the Count-bishop of Ceneda,
In fief perpetual to myself and heirs,
To portion them (leaving my city spoil,
My palace and my treasures, to your forfeit)
Between my consort and my kinsmen.
Ben. These
Lie under the state's ban; their chief, thy nephew,
In peril of his own life; but the council
Postpones his trial for the present. If
Thou will'st a state unto thy widow'd princess,
Fear not, for we will do her justice.
Ang. Signors,
I shall not in your spoil! From henceforth, know
I am devoted unto God alone,
And take my refuge in the cloister.
Doge. Come!
The hour may be a hard one, but 't will end.
Have I aught else to undergo save death?
Ben. You have nought to do, except confess and die.
The priest is robed, the scimitar is bare,
And both await without. — But, above all,

Think not to speak unto the people; they
Are now by thousands swarming at the gates,
But these are closed: the Ten, the Avogadori,
The Giunta, and the chief men of the Forty,
Alone will be beholders of thy doom,
And they are ready to attend the Doge.
Doge. The Doge!
Ben. Yes, Doge, thou hast lived and thou shalt die
A sovereign; till the moment which precedes
The separation of that head and trunk,
That ducal crown and head shall be united.
Thou hast forgot thy dignity in deigning
To plot with petty traitors; not so we,
Who in the very punishment acknowledge
The prince. Thy vile accomplices have died
The dog's death, and the wolf's; but thou shalt fall
As falls the lion by the hunters, girt
By those who feel a proud compassion for thee,
And mourn even the inevitable death
Provoked by thy wild wrath and regal fierceness.
Now we remit thee to thy preparation:
Let it be brief, and we ourselves will be
Thy guides unto the place where first we were
United to thee as thy subjects, and
Thy senate; and must now be parted from thee
As such for ever, on the self-same spot.—
Guards! form the Doge's escort to his chamber. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

The Doge's Apartment.

The DOGE *as Prisoner, and the* DUCHESS *attending him.*

Doge. Now, that the priest is gone, 't were useless all
To linger out the miserable minutes;
But one pang more, the pang of parting from thee,
And I will leave the few last grains of sand
Which yet remain of the accorded hour,
Still falling — I have done with Time.
Ang. Alas!
And I have been the cause, the unconscious cause;
And for this funeral marriage, this black union,
Which thou, compliant with my father's wish,
Didst promise at *his* death, thou hast seal'd thine own.
Doge. Not so: there was that in my spirit ever
Which shaped out for itself some great reverse;
The marvel is, it came not until now —
And yet it was foretold me.
Ang. How foretold you?
Doge. Long years ago — so long, they are a doubt
In memory, and yet they live in annals:
When I was in my youth, and served the senate
And signory as podesta and captain
Of the town of Treviso, on a day
Of festival, the sluggish bishop who
Convey'd the Host aroused my rash young anger,
By strange delay and arrogant reply
To my reproof; I raised my hand and smote him,
Until he reel'd beneath his holy burthen;
And as he rose from earth again, he raised
His tremulous hands in pious wrath towards Heaven.
Thence pointing to the Host, which had fallen from him,
He turn'd to me, and said, 'The hour will come
When he thou hast o'erthrown shall overthrow thee:
The glory shall depart from out thy house,
The wisdom shall be shaken from thy soul,
And in thy best maturity of mind
A madness of the heart shall seize upon thee;
Passion shall tear thee when all passions cease
In other men, or mellow into virtues;
And majesty, which decks all other heads,
Shall crown to leave thee headless; honours shall
But prove to thee the heralds of destruction,
And hoary hairs of shame, and both of death,
But not such death as fits an aged man.'
Thus saying, he pass'd on. — That hour is come.
Ang. And with this warning couldst thou not have striven
To avert the fatal moment, and atone
By penitence for that which thou hadst done?

Doge. I own the words went to my heart, so much
That I remember'd them amid the maze
Of life, as if they form'd a spectral voice
Which shook me in a supernatural dream;
And I repented; but 't was not for me
To pull in resolution: what must be
I could not change, and would not fear. — Nay more,
Thou canst not have forgot, what all remember,
That on my day of landing here as Doge,
On my return from Rome, a mist of such
Unwonted density went on before
The Bucentaur, like the columnar cloud
Which usher'd Israel out of Egypt, till
The pilot was misled, and disembark'd us
Between the pillars of Saint Mark's, where 't is
The custom of the state to put to death
Its criminals, instead of touching at
The Riva della Paglia, as the wont is, —
So that all Venice shudder'd at the omen.
Ang. Ah! little boots it now to recollect
Such things.
Doge. And yet I find a comfort in
The thought that these things are the work of Fate;
For I would rather yield to gods than men,
Or cling to any creed of destiny,
Rather than deem these mortals, most of whom
I know to be as worthless as the dust,
And weak as worthless, more than instruments
Of an o'er-ruling power; they in themselves
Were all incapable — they could not be
Victors of him who oft had conquer'd for them!
Ang. Employ the minutes left in aspirations
Of a more healing nature; and in peace
Even with these wretches take thy flight to Heaven.
Doge. I *am* at peace: the peace of certainty
That a sure hour will come, when their sons' sons,
And this proud city, and these azure waters,
And all which makes them eminent and bright,
Shall be a desolation and a curse,
A hissing and a scoff unto the nations,
A Carthage, and a Tyre, an Ocean Babel!
Ang. Speak not thus now; the surge of passion still
Sweeps o'er thee to the last; thou dost deceive
Thyself, and canst not injure them — be calmer.
Doge. I stand within eternity, and see
Into eternity, and I behold —
Ay, palpable as I see thy sweet face
For the last time — the days which I denounce
Unto all time against these wave-girt walls,
And they who are indwellers.
Guard (*coming forward*). Doge of Venice,
The Ten are in attendance on your highness.
Doge. Then farewell, Angiolina! — one embrace —
Forgive the old man who hath been to thee
A fond but fatal husband — love my memory —
I would not ask so much for me still living,
But thou canst judge of me more kindly now,
Seeing my evil feelings are at rest.
Besides, of all the fruit of these long years,
Glory, and wealth, and power, and fame, and name,
Which generally leave some flowers to bloom
Even o'er the grave, I have nothing left, not even
A little love, or friendship, or esteem,
No, not enough to extract an epitaph
From ostentatious kinsmen. In one hour
I have uprooted all my former life,
And outlived every thing, except thy heart,
The pure, the good, the gentle, which will oft
With unimpair'd but not a clamorous grief
Still keep — Thou turn'st so pale! Alas! she faints,
She has no breath, no pulse! — Guards! lend your aid —
I cannot leave her thus, and yet 't is better,
Since every lifeless moment spares a pang.
When she shakes off this temporary death,
I shall be with the Eternal. — Call her women —
One look! — how cold her hand! — as cold as mine
Shall be ere she recovers. — Gently tend her,
And take my last thanks — I am ready now.

[*The Attendants of* ANGIOLINA *enter, and surround their mistress, who has fainted.* — *Exeunt the* DOGE, *Guards, etc., etc.*

SCENE III

The Court of the Ducal Palace: the outer gates are shut against the people. — *The* DOGE *enters in his ducal robes, in procession with the Council of Ten and other Patricians, attended by the Guards, till they arrive at the top of the 'Giants' Staircase' (where the Doges took the oaths); the Executioner is stationed there with his sword.* — *On arriving, a Chief of the Ten takes off the ducal cap from the Doge's head.*

Doge. So now the Doge is nothing, and at last
I am again Marino Faliero:
'T is well to be so, though but for a moment.
Here was I crown'd, and here, bear witness, Heaven!
With how much more contentment I resign
That shining mockery, the ducal bauble,
Than I received the fatal ornament.
One of the Ten. Thou tremblest, Faliero!
Doge. 'T is with age, then.
Ben. Faliero! hast thou aught further to commend,
Compatible with justice, to the senate?
Doge. I would commend my nephew to their mercy,
My consort to their justice; for methinks
My death, and such a death, might settle all
Between the state and me.
Ben. They shall be cared for,
Even notwithstanding thine unheard-of crime.
Doge. Unheard of! ay, there 's not a history
But shows a thousand crown'd conspirators
Against the people; but to set them free
One sovereign only died, and one is dying.
Ben. And who were they who fell in such a cause?
Doge. The King of Sparta, and the Doge of Venice —
Agis and Faliero!
Ben. Hast thou more
To utter or to do?
Doge. May I speak?
Ben. Thou may'st;
But recollect the people are without,
Beyond the compass of the human voice.
Doge. I speak to Time, and to Eternity
Of which I grow a portion, not to man.
Ye elements! in which to be resolved
I hasten, let my voice be as a spirit
Upon you! Ye blue waves, which bore my banner!
Ye winds, which flutter'd o'er as if you loved it,
And fill'd my swelling sails as they were wafted
To many a triumph! Thou, my native earth,
Which I have bled for, and thou foreign earth,
Which drank this willing blood from many a wound!
Ye stones, in which my gore will not sink, but
Reek up to Heaven! Ye skies, which will receive it!
Thou sun, which shinest on these things! and Thou
Who kindlest and who quenchest suns! — Attest!
I am not innocent — but are these guiltless?
I perish, but not unavenged; far ages
Float up from the abyss of time to be,
And show these eyes, before they close, the doom
Of this proud city, and I leave my curse
On her and hers for ever! — Yes, the hours
Are silently engendering of the day,
When she, who built 'gainst Attila a bulwark,
Shall yield, and bloodlessly and basely yield,
Unto a bastard Attila, without
Shedding so much blood in her last defence
As these old veins, oft drain'd in shielding her,
Shall pour in sacrifice. — She shall be bought
And sold, and be an appanage to those
Who shall despise her! — She shall stoop to be
A province for an empire, petty town
In lieu of capital, with slaves for senates,
Beggars for nobles, panders for a people!
Then when the Hebrew 's in thy palaces,
The Hun in thy high places, and the Greek
Walks o'er thy mart, and smiles on it for his;
When thy patricians beg their bitter bread
In narrow streets, and in their shameful need
Make their nobility a plea for pity;
Then, when the few who still retain a wreck
Of their great fathers' heritage shall fawn
Round a barbarian Vice of Kings' Vicegerent,
Even in the palace where they sway'd as sovereigns,
Even in the palace where they slew their sovereign,
Proud of some name they have disgraced, or sprung
From an adulteress boastful of her guilt
With some large gondolier or foreign soldier,
Shall bear about their bastardy in triumph
To the third spurious generation; — when

Thy sons are in the lowest scale of being,
Slaves turn'd o'er to the vanquish'd by the victors,
Despised by cowards for greater cowardice,
And scorn'd even by the vicious for such vices
As in the monstrous grasp of their conception
Defy all codes to image or to name them;
Then, when of Cyprus, now thy subject kingdom,
All thine inheritance shall be her shame
Entail'd on thy less virtuous daughters, grown
A wider proverb for worse prostitution; —
When all the ills of conquer'd states shall cling thee,
Vice without splendour, sin without relief
Even from the gloss of love to smooth it o'er,
But in its stead, coarse lusts of habitude,
Prurient yet passionless, cold studied lewdness,
Depraving nature's frailty to an art; —
When these and more are heavy on thee, when
Smiles without mirth, and pastimes without pleasure,
Youth without honour, age without respect,
Meanness and weakness, and a sense of woe
'Gainst which thou wilt not strive, and dar'st not murmur,
Have made thee last and worst of peopled deserts,
Then, in the last gasp of thine agony,
Amidst thy many murders, think of *mine!*
Thou den of drunkards with the blood of princes!
Gehenna of the waters! thou sea Sodom!
Thus I devote thee to the infernal gods!
Thee and thy serpent seed!

[*Here the* Doge *turns and addresses the Executioner.*

Slave, do thine office!
Strike as I struck the foe! Strike as I would
Have struck those tyrants! Strike deep as my curse!
Strike — and but once!

[*The* Doge *throws himself upon his knees, and as the Executioner raises his sword the scene closes.*

SCENE IV

The Piazza and Piazzetta of Saint Mark's. — The People in crowds gathered round the grated gates of the Ducal Palace, which are shut.

First Citizen. I have gain'd the gate, and can discern the Ten,
Robed in their gowns of state, ranged round the Doge.

Second Cit. I cannot reach thee with mine utmost effort.
How is it? let us hear at least, since sight
Is thus prohibited unto the people,
Except the occupiers of those bars.

First Cit. One has approach'd the Doge, and now they strip
The ducal bonnet from his head — and now
He raises his keen eyes to Heaven; I see
Them glitter, and his lips move — Hush! hush — no,
'T was but a murmur — Curse upon the distance!
His words are inarticulate, but the voice
Swells up like mutter'd thunder; would we could
But gather a sole sentence!

Second Cit. Hush! we perhaps may catch the sound.

First Cit. 'T is vain,
I cannot hear him. — How his hoary hair
Streams on the wind like foam upon the wave!
Now — now — he kneels — and now they form a circle
Round him, and all is hidden — but I see
The lifted sword in air — Ah! hark! it falls!

[*The People murmur.*

Third Cit. Then they have murder'd him who would have freed us.

Fourth Cit. He was a kind man to the commons ever.

Fifth Cit. Wisely they did to keep their portals barr'd.
Would we had known the work they were preparing
Ere we were summon'd here — we would have brought
Weapons, and forced them!

Sixth Cit. Are you sure he's dead?

First Cit. I saw the sword fall — Lo! what have we here?

Enter on the Balcony of the Palace which fronts Saint Mark's Place a Chief of the Ten, *with a bloody sword. He waves it thrice before the People, and exclaims,*

'Justice hath dealt upon the mighty Traitor!'

[*The gates are opened; the populace rush in towards the 'Giants' Staircase,' where the execution has taken place. The foremost of them exclaims to those behind,*

The gory head rolls down the Giants' Steps

[*The curtain falls.*

SARDANAPALUS

A TRAGEDY

TO
THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOETHE
A STRANGER
PRESUMES TO OFFER THE HOMAGE
OF A LITERARY VASSAL TO HIS LIEGE LORD,
THE FIRST OF EXISTING WRITERS,
WHO HAS CREATED
THE LITERATURE OF HIS OWN COUNTRY,
AND ILLUSTRATED THAT OF EUROPE.
THE UNWORTHY PRODUCTION
WHICH THE AUTHOR VENTURES TO INSCRIBE TO
HIM
IS ENTITLED
SARDANAPALUS.

PREFACE

In publishing the following Tragedies[1] I have only to repeat, that they were not composed with the most remote view to the stage. On the attempt made by the Managers in a former instance, the public opinion has been already expressed. With regard to my own private feelings, as it seems that they are to stand for nothing, I shall say nothing.

For the historical foundation of the following compositions the reader is referred to the Notes.

The Author has in one instance attempted to preserve, and in the other to approach, the 'unities;' conceiving that with any very distant departure from them, there may be poetry, but can be no drama. He is aware of the unpopularity of this notion in present English literature; but it is not a system of his own, being merely an opinion, which, not very long ago, was the law of literature throughout the world, and is still so in the more civilised part of it. But 'nous avons changé tout cela,' and are reaping the advantages of the change. The writer is far from conceiving that any thing he can adduce by personal precept or example can at all approach his regular, or even irregular predecessors; he is merely giving a reason why he preferred the more regular formation of a structure, however feeble, to an entire abandonment of all rules whatsoever. Where he has failed, the failure is in the architect, — and not in the art.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN

Sardanapalus, *King of Nineveh and Assyria, etc.*
Arbaces, *the Mede who aspired to the Throne.*
Beleses, *a Chaldean and Soothsayer.*
Salemenes, *the King's Brother-in-law.*
Altada, *an Assyrian Officer of the Palace.*
Pania.
Zames.
Sfero.
Balea.

WOMEN

Zarina, *the Queen.*
Myrrha, *an Ionian female Slave, and the Favourite of* **Sardanapalus.**
Women composing the Harem of **Sardanapalus**, *Guards, Attendants, Chaldean Priests, Medes, etc., etc.*

Scene — a Hall in the Royal Palace of Nineveh.

In this tragedy it has been my intention to follow the account of Diodorus Siculus; reducing it, however, to such dramatic regularity as I best could, and trying to approach the unities. I therefore suppose the rebellion to explode and succeed in one day by a sudden conspiracy, instead of the long war of the history.

ACT I

Scene I

A Hall in the Palace.

Salemenes (*solus*). He hath wrong'd his queen, but still he is her lord;
He hath wrong'd my sister, still he is my brother;
He hath wrong'd his people, still he is their sovereign,
And I must be his friend as well as subject:
He must not perish thus. I will not see
The blood of Nimrod and Semiramis
Sink in the earth, and thirteen hundred years
Of empire ending like a shepherd's tale;
He must be roused. In his effeminate heart
There is a careless courage which corruption
Has not all quench'd, and latent energies,
Repress'd by circumstance but not destroy'd —
Steep'd, but not drown'd, in deep voluptuousness.
If born a peasant, he had been a man
To have reach'd an empire: to an empire born,
He will bequeath none; nothing but a name,
Which his sons will not prize in heritage: —
Yet, not all lost, even yet he may redeem

---

[1] [*Sardanapalus* originally appeared in the same volume with *The Two Foscari* and *Cain.*]

His sloth and shame by only being that
Which he should be, as easily as the thing
He should not be and is. Were it less toil
To sway his nations than consume his life?
To head an army than to rule a harem?
He sweats in palling pleasures, dulls his soul,
And saps his goodly strength, in toils which yield not
Health like the chase, nor glory like the war —
He must be roused. Alas! there is no sound
[*Sound of soft music heard from within.*
To rouse him short of thunder. Hark! the lute,
The lyre, the timbrel; the lascivious tinklings
Of lulling instruments, the softening voices
Of women, and of beings less than women,
Must chime in to the echo of his revel,
While the great king of all we know of earth
Lolls crown'd with roses, and his diadem
Lies negligently by to be caught up
By the first manly hand which dares to snatch it.
Lo, where they come! already I perceive
The reeking odours of the perfumed trains,
And see the bright gems of the glittering girls,
At once his chorus and his council, flash
Along the gallery, and amidst the damsels,
As femininely garb'd, and scarce less female,
The grandson of Semiramis, the man-queen. —
He comes! Shall I await him? yes, and front him,
And tell him what all good men tell each other,
Speaking of him and his. They come, the slaves,
Led by the monarch subject to his slaves.

SCENE II

Enter SARDANAPALUS *effeminately dressed, his Head crowned with Flowers, and his Robe negligently flowing, attended by a Train of Women and young Slaves.*

Sar. (*speaking to some of his attendants*).
Let the pavilion over the Euphrates
Be garlanded, and lit, and furnish'd forth
For an especial banquet; at the hour
Of midnight we will sup there: see nought wanting,
And bid the galley be prepared. There is
A cooling breeze which crisps the broad clear river:
We will embark anon. Fair nymphs, who deign
To share the soft hours of Sardanapalus,
We 'll meet again in that the sweetest hour,
When we shall gather like the stars above us,
And you will form a heaven as bright as theirs.
Till then, let each be mistress of her time:
And thou, my own Ionian Myrrha, choose;
Wilt thou along with them or me?
Myr. My lord —
Sar. My lord, my life! why answerest thou so coldly?
It is the curse of kings to be so answer'd.
Rule thy own hours, thou rulest mine — say, wouldst thou
Accompany our guests, or charm away
The moments from me?
Myr. The king's choice is mine.
Sar. I pray thee say not so: my chiefest joy
Is to contribute to thine every wish.
I do not dare to breathe my own desire,
Lest it should clash with thine; for thou art still
Too prompt to sacrifice thy thoughts for others.
Myr. I would remain: I have no happiness
Save in beholding thine; yet —
Sar. Yet! what YET?
Thy own sweet will shall be the only barrier
Which ever rises betwixt thee and me.
Myr. I think the present is the wonted hour
Of council; it were better I retire.
Sal. (*comes forward and says*) The Ionian slave says well: let her retire.
Sar. Who answers? How now, brother?
Sal. The *queen's* brother,
And your most faithful vassal, royal lord.
Sar. (*addressing his train*). As I have said, let all dispose their hours
Till midnight, when again we pray your presence. [*The court retiring.*
(*To* MYRRHA, *who is going.*) Myrrha! I thought *thou* wouldst remain.
Myr. Great king,
Thou didst not say so.
Sar. But *thou* lookèdst it:

I know each glance of those Ionic eyes,
Which said thou wouldst not leave me.
Myr. Sire! your brother —
Sal. His *consort's* brother, minion of Ionia!
How darest *thou* name *me* and not blush?
Sar. Not blush!
Thou hast no more eyes than heart to make her crimson
Like to the dying day on Caucasus,
Where sunset tints the snow with rosy shadows,
And then reproach her with thine own cold blindness,
Which will not see it. What, in tears, my Myrrha?
Sal. Let them flow on; she weeps for more than one,
And is herself the cause of bitterer tears.
Sar. Cursèd be he who caused those tears to flow!
Sal. Curse not thyself — millions do that already.
Sar. Thou dost forget thee: make me not remember
I am a monarch.
Sal. Would thou couldst!
Myr. My sovereign,
I pray, and thou, too, prince, permit my absence.
Sar. Since it must be so, and this churl has check'd
Thy gentle spirit, go; but recollect
That we must forthwith meet: I had rather lose
An empire than thy presence. [*Exit* MYRRHA.
Sal. It may be,
Thou wilt lose both, and both for ever!
Sar. Brother,
I can at least command myself, who listen
To language such as this: yet urge me not
Beyond my easy nature.
Sal. 'T is beyond
That easy, far too easy, idle nature,
Which I would urge thee. O that I could rouse thee!
Though 't were against myself.
Sar. By the god Baal!
The man would make me tyrant.
Sal. So thou art.
Think'st thou there is no tyranny but that
Of blood and chains? The despotism of vice,
The weakness and the wickedness of luxury,
The negligence, the apathy, the evils
Of sensual sloth — produce ten thousand tyrants,
Whose delegated cruelty surpasses
The worst acts of one energetic master,
However harsh and hard in his own bearing.
The false and fond examples of thy lusts
Corrupt no less than they oppress, and sap
In the same moment all thy pageant power
And those who should sustain it; so that whether
A foreign foe invade, or civil broil
Distract within, both will alike prove fatal:
The first thy subjects have no heart to conquer;
The last they rather would assist than vanquish.
Sar. Why, what makes thee the mouthpiece of the people?
Sal. Forgiveness of the queen, my sister's wrongs;
A natural love unto my infant nephews;
Faith to the king, a faith he may need shortly,
In more than words; respect for Nimrod's line;
Also, another thing thou knowest not.
Sar. What 's that?
Sal. To thee an unknown word.
Sar. Yet speak it;
I love to learn.
Sal. Virtue.
Sar. Not know the word!
Never was word yet rung so in my ears —
Worse than the rabble's shout, or splitting trumpet:
I 've heard thy sister talk of nothing else.
Sal. To change the irksome theme, then, hear of vice.
Sar. From whom?
Sal. Even from the winds, if thou couldst listen
Unto the echoes of the nation's voice.
Sar. Come, I 'm indulgent, as thou knowest, patient,
As thou hast often proved — speak out, what moves thee?
Sal. Thy peril.
Sar. Say on.
Sal. Thus, then; all the nations,
For they are many, whom thy father left
In heritage, are loud in wrath against thee.
Sar. 'Gainst *me!* What would the slaves?
Sal. A king.

Sar. And what
Am I then?
Sal. In their eyes a nothing; but
In mine a man who might be something still.
Sar. The railing drunkards! why, what would they have?
Have they not peace and plenty?
Sal. Of the first
More than is glorious; of the last, far less
Than the king recks of.
Sar. Whose then is the crime,
But the false satraps who provide no better?
Sal. And somewhat in the monarch who ne'er looks
Beyond his palace walls, or if he stirs
Beyond them, 't is but to some mountain palace,
Till summer heats wear down. O glorious Baal!
Who built up this vast empire, and wert made
A god, or at the least shinest like a god
Through the long centuries of thy renown,
This, thy presumed descendant, ne'er beheld
As king the kingdoms thou didst leave as hero,
Won with thy blood, and toil, and time, and peril!
For what? to furnish imposts for a revel,
Or multiplied extortions for a minion.
Sar. I understand thee — thou wouldst have me go
Forth as a conqueror. By all the stars
Which the Chaldeans read — the restless slaves
Deserve that I should curse them with their wishes,
And lead them forth to glory.
Sal. Wherefore not?
Semiramis — a woman only — led
These our Assyrians to the solar shores
Of Ganges.
Sar. 'T is most true. And *how* return'd?
Sal. Why, like a *man* — a hero; baffled, but
Not vanquish'd. With but twenty guards, she made
Good her retreat to Bactria.
Sar. And how many
Left she behind in India to the vultures?
Sal. Our annals say not.
Sar. Then I will say for them —
That she had better woven within her palace
Some twenty garments, than with twenty guards
Have fled to Bactria, leaving to the ravens,
And wolves, and men — the fiercer of the three —
Her myriads of fond subjects. Is *this* glory?
Then let me live in ignominy ever.
Sal. All warlike spirits have not the same fate.
Semiramis, the glorious parent of
A hundred kings, although she fail'd in India,
Brought Persia, Media, Bactria, to the realm
Which she once sway'd — and thou *mightst* sway.
Sar. I *sway* them —
She but subdued them.
Sal. It may be ere long
That they will need her sword more than your sceptre.
Sar. There was a certain Bacchus, was there not?
I 've heard my Greek girls speak of such — they say
He was a god, that is, a Grecian god,
An idol foreign to Assyria's worship,
Who conquer'd this same golden realm of Ind
Thou prat'st of, where Semiramis was vanquish'd.
Sal. I have heard of such a man; and thou perceiv'st
That he is deem'd a god for what he did.
Sar. And in his godship I will honour him —
Not much as man. What, ho! my cupbearer!
Sal. What means the king?
Sar. To worship your new god
And ancient conqueror. Some wine, I say.

Enter Cupbearer.

Sar. (*addressing the Cupbearer*). Bring me the golden goblet thick with gems,
Which bears the name of Nimrod's chalice. Hence,
Fill full, and bear it quickly. [*Exit Cupbearer.*
Sal. Is this moment

A fitting one for the resumption of
Thy yet unslept-off revels?

Re-enter Cupbearer, with wine.

Sar. (*taking the cup from him*). Noble kinsman,
If these barbarian Greeks of the far shores
And skirts of these our realms lie not, this Bacchus
Conquer'd the whole of India, did he not?
Sal. He did, and thence was deem'd a deity.
Sar. Not so: — of all his conquests a few columns,
Which may be his, and might be mine, if I
Thought them worth purchase and conveyance, are
The landmarks of the seas of gore he shed,
The realms he wasted, and the hearts he broke.
But here, here in this goblet is his title
To immortality — the immortal grape
From which he first express'd the soul, and gave
To gladden that of man, as some atonement
For the victorious mischiefs he had done.
Had it not been for this, he would have been
A mortal still in name as in his grave;
And, like my ancestor Semiramis,
A sort of semi-glorious human monster.
Here 's that which deified him — let it now
Humanise thee: my surly, chiding brother,
Pledge me to the Greek god!
Sal. For all thy realms
I would not so blaspheme our country's creed.
Sar. That is to say, thou thinkest him a hero,
That he shed blood by oceans; and no god,
Because he turn'd a fruit to an enchantment,
Which cheers the sad, revives the old, inspires
The young, makes weariness forget his toil,
And fear her danger; opens a new world
When this, the present, palls. Well, then, *I* pledge thee
And *him* as a true man, who did his utmost
In good or evil to surprise mankind.
[*Drinks.*
Sal. Wilt thou resume a revel at this hour?
Sar. And if I did, 't were better than a trophy,
Being bought without a tear. But that is not
My present purpose: since thou wilt not pledge me,
Continue what thou pleasest.
(*To the Cupbearer.*) Boy, retire.
[*Exit Cupbearer.*
Sal. I would but have recall'd thee from thy dream;
Better by me awaken'd than rebellion.
Sar. Who should rebel? or why? what cause? pretext?
I am the lawful king, descended from
A race of kings who knew no predecessors.
What have I done to thee, or to the people,
That thou shouldst rail, or they rise up against me?
Sal. Of what thou hast done to me, I speak not.
Sar. But
Thou think'st that I have wrong'd the queen: is 't not so?
Sal. *Think!* Thou hast wrong'd her!
Sar. Patience, prince, and hear me.
She has all power and splendour of her station,
Respect, the tutelage of Assyria's heirs,
The homage and the appanage of sovereignty.
I married her as monarchs wed — for state,
And loved her as most husbands love their wives.
If she or thou supposèdst I could link me
Like a Chaldean peasant to his mate,
Ye knew nor me, nor monarchs, nor mankind.
Sal. I pray thee, change the theme: my blood disdains
Complaint, and Salemenes' sister seeks not
Reluctant love even from Assyria's lord!
Nor would she deign to accept divided passion
With foreign strumpets and Ionian slaves.
The queen is silent.
Sar. And why not her brother?
Sal. I only echo thee the voice of empires,
Which he who long neglects not long will govern.
Sar. The ungrateful and ungracious slaves! they murmur
Because I have not shed their blood, nor led them

To dry into the desert's dust by myriads,
Or whiten with their bones the banks of Ganges;
Nor decimated them with savage laws,
Nor sweated them to build up pyramids,
Or Babylonian walls.
Sal. Yet these are trophies
More worthy of a people and their prince
Than songs, and lutes, and feasts, and concubines,
And lavish'd treasures, and contemnèd virtues.
Sar. Or for my trophies I have founded cities:
There 's Tarsus and Anchialus, both built
In one day — what could that blood-loving beldame,
My martial grandam, chaste Semiramis,
Do more, except destroy them?
Sal. 'T is most true;
I own thy merit in those founded cities,
Built for a whim, recorded with a verse
Which shames both them and thee to coming ages.
Sar. Shame me! by Baal, the cities, though well built,
Are not more goodly than the verse! Say what
Thou wilt 'gainst me, my mode of life or rule,
But nothing 'gainst the truth of that brief record.
Why, those few lines contain the history
Of all things human: hear — 'Sardanapalus,
The king, and son of Anacyndaraxes,
In one day built Anchialus and Tarsus.
Eat, drink, and love; the rest 's not worth a fillip.'
Sal. A worthy moral, and a wise inscription,
For a king to put up before his subjects!
Sar. Oh, thou wouldst have me doubtless set up edicts —
'Obey the king — contribute to his treasure —
Recruit his phalanx — spill your blood at bidding —
Fall down and worship, or get up and toil.'
Or thus — 'Sardanapalus on this spot
Slew fifty thousand of his enemies.
These are their sepulchres, and this his trophy.'
I leave such things to conquerors; enough
For me, if I can make my subjects feel
The weight of human misery less, and glide
Ungroaning to the tomb: I take no license
Which I deny to them. We all are men.
Sal. Thy sires have been revered as gods —
Sar. In dust
And death, where they are neither gods nor men.
Talk not of such to me! the worms are gods;
At least they banqueted upon your gods,
And died for lack of farther nutriment.
Those gods were merely men; look to their issue —
I feel a thousand mortal things about me,
But nothing godlike, — unless it may be
The thing which you condemn, a disposition
To love and to be merciful, to pardon
The follies of my species, and (that 's human)
To be indulgent to my own.
Sal. Alas!
The doom of Nineveh is seal'd. — Woe — woe
To the unrivall'd city!
Sar. What dost dread?
Sal. Thou art guarded by thy foes: in a few hours
The tempest may break out which overwhelms thee,
And thine and mine; and in another day
What *is* shall be the past of Belus' race.
Sar. What must we dread?
Sal. Ambitious treachery,
Which has environ'd thee with snares; but yet
There is resource: empower me with thy signet
To quell the machinations, and I lay
The heads of thy chief foes before thy feet.
Sar. The heads — how many?
Sal. Must I stay to number
When even thine own 's in peril? Let me go;
Give me thy signet — trust me with the rest.
Sar. I will trust no man with unlimited lives.
When we take those from others, we nor know
What we have taken, nor the thing we give.
Sal. Wouldst thou not take their lives who seek for thine?
Sar. That 's a hard question, but I answer, Yes.

Cannot the thing be done without? Who are they
Whom thou suspectest? — Let them be arrested.
Sal. I would thou wouldst not ask me; the next moment
Will send my answer through thy babbling troop
Of paramours, and thence fly o'er the palace,
Even to the city, and so baffle all. —
Trust me.
Sar. Thou knowest I have done so ever:
Take thou the signet. [*Gives the signet.*
Sal. I have one more request.
Sar. Name it.
Sal. That thou this night forbear the banquet
In the pavilion over the Euphrates.
Sar. Forbear the banquet! Not for all the plotters
That ever shook a kingdom! Let them come,
And do their worst: I shall not blench for them;
Nor rise the sooner; nor forbear the goblet;
Nor crown me with a single rose the less;
Nor lose one joyous hour. — I fear them not.
Sal. But thou wouldst arm thee, wouldst thou not, if needful?
Sar. Perhaps. I have the goodliest armour, and
A sword of such a temper; and a bow
And javelin, which might furnish Nimrod forth:
A little heavy, but yet not unwieldy.
And now I think on 't, 't is long since I 've used them,
Even in the chase. Hast ever seen them, brother?
Sal. Is this a time for such fantastic trifling? —
If need be, wilt thou wear them?
Sar. Will I not?
Oh! if it must be so, and these rash slaves
Will not be ruled with less, I 'll use the sword
Till they shall wish it turn'd into a distaff.
Sal. They say thy sceptre 's turn'd to that already.
Sar. That 's false! but let them say so: the old Greeks,
Of whom our captives often sing, related
The same of their chief hero, Hercules,
Because he loved a Lydian queen: thou seest
The populace of all the nations seize
Each calumny they can to sink their sovereigns.
Sal. They did not speak thus of thy fathers.
Sar. No;
They dared not. They were kept to toil and combat;
And never changed their chains but for their armour;
Now they have peace and pastime, and the license
To revel and to rail; it irks me not.
I would not give the smile of one fair girl
For all the popular breath that e'er divided
A name from nothing. What are the rank tongues
Of this vile herd, grown insolent with feeding,
That I should prize their noisy praise, or dread
Their noisome clamour?
Sal. You have said they are men;
As such their hearts are something.
Sar. So my dogs' are;
And better, as more faithful: — but, proceed;
Thou hast my signet: — since they are tumultuous,
Let them be temper'd, yet not roughly, till
Necessity enforce it. I hate all pain,
Given or received; we have enough within us,
The meanest vassal as the loftiest monarch,
Not to add to each other's natural burthen
Of mortal misery, but rather lessen,
By mild reciprocal alleviation,
The fatal penalties imposed on life:
But this they know not, or they will not know.
I have, by Baal! done all I could to soothe them:
I made no wars, I added no new imposts,
I interfered not with their civic lives,
I let them pass their days as best might suit them,
Passing my own as suited me.
Sal. Thou stopp'st
Short of the duties of a king; and therefore
They say thou art unfit to be a monarch.
Sar. They lie. — Unhappily, I am unfit
To be aught save a monarch; else for me
The meanest Mede might be the king instead.

Sal. There is one Mede, at least, who seeks to be so.
Sar. What mean'st thou?—'t is thy secret; thou desirest
Few questions, and I 'm not of curious nature.
Take the fit steps; and, since necessity
Requires, I sanction and support thee. Ne'er
Was man who more desired to rule in peace
The peaceful only: if they rouse me, better
They had conjured up stern Nimrod from his ashes,
'The mighty hunter.' I will turn these realms
To one wide desert chase of brutes, who *were*,
But *would* no more, by their own choice, be human.
What they have found me, they belie; *that which*
They yet may find me—shall defy their wish
To speak it worse; and let them thank themselves.
Sal. Then thou at last canst feel?
Sar. Feel! who feels not
Ingratitude?
Sal. I will not pause to answer
With words, but deeds. Keep thou awake that energy
Which sleeps at times, but is not dead within thee,
And thou may'st yet be glorious in thy reign,
As powerful in thy realm. Farewell!
[*Exit* SALEMENES.
Sar. (*solus*). Farewell!
He 's gone; and on his finger bears my signet,
Which is to him a sceptre. He is stern
As I am heedless; and the slaves deserve
To feel a master. What may be the danger,
I know not: he hath found it, let him quell it.
Must I consume my life—this little life—
In guarding against all may make it less?
It is not worth so much! It were to die
Before my hour, to live in dread of death,
Tracing revolt; suspecting all about me,
Because they are near; and all who are remote,
Because they are far. But if it should be so—
If they should sweep me off from earth and empire,
Why, what is earth or empire of the earth?
I have loved, and lived, and multiplied my image;
To die is no less natural than those
Acts of this clay! 'T is true I have not shed
Blood as I might have done, in oceans, till
My name became the synonyme of death—
A terror and a trophy. But for this
I feel no penitence; my life is love:
If I must shed blood, it shall be by force.
Till now, no drop from an Assyrian vein
Hath flow'd for me, nor hath the smallest coin
Of Nineveh's vast treasures e'er been lavish'd
On objects which could cost her sons a tear:
If then they hate me, 't is because I hate not:
If they rebel, 't is because I oppress not.
Oh, men! ye must be ruled with scythes, not sceptres,
And mow'd down like the grass, else all we reap
Is rank abundance, and a rotten harvest
Of discontents infecting the fair soil,
Making a desert of fertility.—
I 'll think no more.—Within there, ho!

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Sar. Slave, tell
The Ionian Myrrha we would crave her presence.
Attend. King, she is here.

MYRRHA *enters.*

Sar. (*apart to Attendant*). Away!
(*Addressing* MYRRHA.) Beautiful being!
Thou dost almost anticipate my heart;
It throbb'd for thee, and here thou comest: let me
Deem that some unknown influence, some sweet oracle,
Communicates between us, though unseen,
In absence, and attracts us to each other.
Myr. There doth.
Sar. I know there doth, but not its name:
What is it?
Myr. In my native land a God,
And in my heart a feeling like a God's,
Exalted; yet I own 't is only mortal;
For what I feel is humble, and yet happy—
That is, it would be happy; but—
[MYRRHA *pauses.*

Cannot the thing be done without? Who are they
Whom thou suspectest? — Let them be arrested.
Sal. I would thou wouldst not ask me; the next moment
Will send my answer through thy babbling troop
Of paramours, and thence fly o'er the palace,
Even to the city, and so baffle all. —
Trust me.
Sar. Thou knowest I have done so ever:
Take thou the signet. [*Gives the signet.*
Sal. I have one more request.
Sar. Name it.
Sal. That thou this night forbear the banquet
In the pavilion over the Euphrates.
Sar. Forbear the banquet! Not for all the plotters
That ever shook a kingdom! Let them come,
And do their worst: I shall not blench for them;
Nor rise the sooner; nor forbear the goblet;
Nor crown me with a single rose the less;
Nor lose one joyous hour. — I fear them not.
Sal. But thou wouldst arm thee, wouldst thou not, if needful?
Sar. Perhaps. I have the goodliest armour, and
A sword of such a temper; and a bow
And javelin, which might furnish Nimrod forth:
A little heavy, but yet not unwieldy.
And now I think on 't, 't is long since I 've used them,
Even in the chase. Hast ever seen them, brother?
Sal. Is this a time for such fantastic trifling? —
If need be, wilt thou wear them?
Sar. Will I not?
Oh! if it must be so, and these rash slaves
Will not be ruled with less, I 'll use the sword
Till they shall wish it turn'd into a distaff.
Sal. They say thy sceptre 's turn'd to that already.
Sar. That 's false! but let them say so: the old Greeks,
Of whom our captives often sing, related
The same of their chief hero, Hercules,
Because he loved a Lydian queen: thou seest
The populace of all the nations seize
Each calumny they can to sink their sovereigns.
Sal. They did not speak thus of thy fathers.
Sar. No;
They dared not. They were kept to toil and combat;
And never changed their chains but for their armour;
Now they have peace and pastime, and the license
To revel and to rail; it irks me not.
I would not give the smile of one fair girl
For all the popular breath that e'er divided
A name from nothing. What are the rank tongues
Of this vile herd, grown insolent with feeding,
That I should prize their noisy praise, or dread
Their noisome clamour?
Sal. You have said they are men;
As such their hearts are something.
Sar. So my dogs' are;
And better, as more faithful: — but, proceed;
Thou hast my signet: — since they are tumultuous,
Let them be temper'd, yet not roughly, till
Necessity enforce it. I hate all pain,
Given or received; we have enough within us,
The meanest vassal as the loftiest monarch,
Not to add to each other's natural burthen
Of mortal misery, but rather lessen,
By mild reciprocal alleviation,
The fatal penalties imposed on life:
But this they know not, or they will not know.
I have, by Baal! done all I could to soothe them:
I made no wars, I added no new imposts,
I interfered not with their civic lives,
I let them pass their days as best might suit them,
Passing my own as suited me.
Sal. Thou stopp'st
Short of the duties of a king; and therefore
They say thou art unfit to be a monarch.
Sar. They lie. — Unhappily, I am unfit
To be aught save a monarch; else for me
The meanest Mede might be the king instead.

Sal. There is one Mede, at least, who seeks to be so.
Sar. What mean'st thou?—'t is thy secret; thou desirest
Few questions, and I 'm not of curious nature.
Take the fit steps; and, since necessity
Requires, I sanction and support thee. Ne'er
Was man who more desired to rule in peace
The peaceful only: if they rouse me, better
They had conjured up stern Nimrod from his ashes,
'The mighty hunter.' I will turn these realms
To one wide desert chase of brutes, who *were*,
But *would* no more, by their own choice, be human.
What they have found me, they belie; *that which*
They yet may find me — shall defy their wish
To speak it worse; and let them thank themselves.
Sal. Then thou at last canst feel?
Sar. Feel! who feels not
Ingratitude?
Sal. I will not pause to answer
With words, but deeds. Keep thou awake that energy
Which sleeps at times, but is not dead within thee,
And thou may'st yet be glorious in thy reign,
As powerful in thy realm. Farewell!
[*Exit* SALEMENES.
Sar. (*solus*). Farewell!
He 's gone; and on his finger bears my signet,
Which is to him a sceptre. He is stern
As I am heedless; and the slaves deserve
To feel a master. What may be the danger,
I know not: he hath found it, let him quell it.
Must I consume my life — this little life —
In guarding against all may make it less?
It is not worth so much! It were to die
Before my hour, to live in dread of death,
Tracing revolt; suspecting all about me,
Because they are near; and all who are remote,
Because they are far. But if it should be so —
If they should sweep me off from earth and empire,
Why, what is earth or empire of the earth?
I have loved, and lived, and multiplied my image;
To die is no less natural than those
Acts of this clay! 'T is true I have not shed
Blood as I might have done, in oceans, till
My name became the synonyme of death —
A terror and a trophy. But for this
I feel no penitence; my life is love:
If I must shed blood, it shall be by force.
Till now, no drop from an Assyrian vein
Hath flow'd for me, nor hath the smallest coin
Of Nineveh's vast treasures e'er been lavish'd
On objects which could cost her sons a tear:
If then they hate me, 't is because I hate not:
If they rebel, 't is because I oppress not.
Oh, men! ye must be ruled with scythes, not sceptres,
And mow'd down like the grass, else all we reap
Is rank abundance, and a rotten harvest
Of discontents infecting the fair soil,
Making a desert of fertility. —
I 'll think no more. — Within there, ho!

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Sar. Slave, tell
The Ionian Myrrha we would crave her presence.
Attend. King, she is here.

MYRRHA *enters*.

Sar. (*apart to Attendant*). Away!
(*Addressing* MYRRHA.) Beautiful being!
Thou dost almost anticipate my heart;
It throbb'd for thee, and here thou comest: let me
Deem that some unknown influence, some sweet oracle,
Communicates between us, though unseen,
In absence, and attracts us to each other.
Myr. There doth.
Sar. I know there doth, but not its name:
What is it?
Myr. In my native land a God,
And in my heart a feeling like a God's,
Exalted; yet I own 't is only mortal;
For what I feel is humble, and yet happy —
That is, it would be happy; but —
[MYRRHA *pauses*.

Sar. There comes
For ever something between us and what
We deem our happiness: let me remove
The barrier which that hesitating accent
Proclaims to thine, and mine is seal’d.
Myr. My lord!—
Sar. My lord—my king—sire—sovereign! thus it is—
For ever thus, address’d with awe. I ne’er
Can see a smile, unless in some broad banquet’s
Intoxicating glare, when the buffoons
Have gorged themselves up to equality,
Or I have quaff’d me down to their abasement.
Myrrha, I can hear all these things, these names,
Lord—king—sire—monarch—nay, time was I prized them;
That is, I suffer’d them—from slaves and nobles;
But when they falter from the lips I love,
The lips which have been press’d to mine, a chill
Comes o’er my heart, a cold sense of the falsehood
Of this my station, which represses feeling
In those for whom I have felt most, and makes me
Wish that I could lay down the dull tiara,
And share a cottage on the Caucasus
With thee, and wear no crowns but those of flowers.
Myr. Would that we could!
Sar. And dost *thou* feel this?—Why?
Myr. Then thou wouldst know what thou canst never know.
Sar. And that is—
Myr. The true value of a heart;
At least, a woman’s.
Sar. I have proved a thousand—
A thousand, and a thousand.
Myr. Hearts?
Sar. I think so.
Myr. Not one! the time may come thou may’st.
Sar. It will.
Hear, Myrrha; Salemenes has declared—
Or why or how he hath divined it, Belus,
Who founded our great realm, knows more than I—
But Salemenes hath declared my throne
In peril.
Myr. He did well.
Sar. And say’st *thou* so?
Thou whom he spurn’d so harshly, and now dared
Drive from our presence with his savage jeers,
And made thee weep and blush?
Myr. I should do both
More frequently, and he did well to call me
Back to my duty. But thou spakest of peril—
Peril to thee—
Sar. Ay, from dark plots and snares
From Medes—and discontented troops and nations.
I know not what—a labyrinth of things—
A maze of mutter’d threats and mysteries:
Thou know’st the man—it is his usual custom.
But he is honest. Come, we’ll think no more on ’t,
But of the midnight festival.
Myr. ’T is time
To think of aught save festivals. Thou hast not
Spurn’d his sage cautions?
Sar. What?—and dost thou fear?
Myr. Fear!—I’m a Greek, and how should I fear death?
A slave, and wherefore should I dread my freedom?
Sar. Then wherefore dost thou turn so pale?
Myr. I love.
Sar. And do not I? I love thee far—far more
Than either the brief life or the wide realm,
Which, it may be, are menaced;—yet I blench not.
Myr. That means thou lovest nor thyself nor me;
For he who loves another loves himself,
Even for that other’s sake. This is too rash:
Kingdoms and lives are not to be so lost.
Sar. Lost!—why, who is the aspiring chief who dared
Assume to win them?
Myr. Who is he should dread
To try so much? When he who is their ruler
Forgets himself, will they remember him?
Sar. Myrrha!
Myr. Frown not upon me: you have smiled

Too often on me not to make those frowns
Bitterer to bear than any punishment
Which they may augur. — King, I am your subject!
Master, I am your slave! Man, I have loved you! —
Loved you, I know not by what fatal weakness,
Although a Greek, and born a foe to monarchs —
A slave, and hating fetters — an Ionian,
And, therefore, when I love a stranger, more
Degraded by that passion than by chains!
Still I have loved you. If that love were strong
Enough to overcome all former nature,
Shall it not claim the privilege to save you?
Sar. *Save* me, my beauty! Thou art very fair,
And what I seek of thee is love — not safety.
Myr. And without love where dwells security?
Sar. I speak of woman's love.
Myr. The very first
Of human life must spring from woman's breast,
Your first small words are taught you from her lips,
Your first tears quench'd by her, and your last sighs
Too often breathed out in a woman's hearing,
When men have shrunk from the ignoble care
Of watching the last hour of him who led them.
Sar. My eloquent Ionian! thou speak'st music,
The very chorus of the tragic song
I have heard thee talk of as the favourite pastime
Of thy far father-land. Nay, weep not — calm thee.
Myr. I weep not. — But I pray thee, do not speak
About my fathers or their land.
Sar. Yet oft
Thou speakest of them.
Myr. True — true: constant thought
Will overflow in words unconsciously;
But when another speaks of Greece, it wounds me.
Sar. Well, then, how wouldst thou *save* me, as thou saidst?
Myr. By teaching thee to save thyself, and not
Thyself alone, but these vast realms, from all
The rage of the worst war — the war of brethren.
Sar. Why, child, I loathe all war, and warriors;
I live in peace and pleasure: what can man
Do more?
Myr. Alas! my lord, with common men
There needs too oft the show of war to keep
The substance of sweet peace; and, for a king,
'T is sometimes better to be fear'd than loved.
Sar. And I have never sought but for the last.
Myr. And now art neither.
Sar. Dost *thou* say so, Myrrha?
Myr. I speak of civic popular love, *self*-love,
Which means that men are kept in awe and law,
Yet not oppress'd — at least they must not think so;
Or if they think so, deem it necessary,
To ward off worse oppression, their own passions.
A king of feasts, and flowers, and wine, and revel,
And love, and mirth, was never king of glory.
Sar. Glory! what 's that?
Myr. Ask of the gods thy fathers.
Sar. They cannot answer; when the priests speak for them,
'T is for some small addition to the temple.
Myr. Look to the annals of thine empire's founders.
Sar. They are so blotted o'er with blood, I cannot.
But what wouldst have? the empire *has been* founded.
I cannot go on multiplying empires.
Myr. Preserve thine own.
Sar. At least, I will enjoy it.
Come, Myrrha, let us go on to the Euphrates:
The hour invites, the galley is prepared,
And the pavilion, deck'd for our return
In fit adornment for the evening banquet,

Shall blaze with beauty and with light, until
It seems unto the stars which are above us
Itself an opposite star; and we will sit
Crown'd with fresh flowers like —
Myr. Victims.
Sar. No, like sovereigns,
The shepherd kings of patriarchal times,
Who knew no brighter gems than summer wreaths,
And none but tearless triumphs. Let us on.

Enter Pania.

Pan. May the king live for ever!
Sar. Not an hour
Longer than he can love. How my soul hates
This language which makes life itself a lie,
Flattering dust with eternity. Well, Pania!
Be brief.
Pan. I am charged by Salemenes to
Reiterate his prayer unto the king,
That for this day, at least, he will not quit
The palace: when the general returns,
He will adduce such reasons as will warrant
His daring, and perhaps obtain the pardon
Of his presumption.
Sar. What! am I then coop'd?
Already captive? can I not even breathe
The breath of heaven? Tell prince Salemenes,
Were all Assyria raging round the walls
In mutinous myriads, I would still go forth.
Pan. I must obey, and yet —
Myr. Oh, monarch, listen:
How many a day and moon thou hast reclined
Within these palace walls in silken dalliance,
And never shown thee to thy people's longing;
Leaving thy subjects' eyes ungratified,
The satraps uncontroll'd, the gods unworshipp'd,
And all things in the anarchy of sloth,
Till all, save evil, slumber'd through the realm!
And wilt thou not now tarry for a day, —
A day which may redeem thee? Wilt thou not
Yield to the few still faithful a few hours,
For them, for thee, for thy past fathers' race,
And for thy sons' inheritance?
Pan. 'T is true!
From the deep urgency with which the prince
Despatch'd me to your sacred presence, I
Must dare to add my feeble voice to that
Which now has spoken.
Sar. No, it must not be.
Myr. For the sake of thy realm!
Sar. Away!
Pan. For that
Of all thy faithful subjects, who will rally
Round thee and thine.
Sar. These are mere fantasies;
There is no peril: — 't is a sullen scheme
Of Salemenes, to approve his zeal,
And show himself more necessary to us.
Myr. By all that 's good and glorious, take this counsel.
Sar. Business to-morrow.
Myr. Ay, or death to-night.
Sar. Why let it come then unexpectedly
'Midst joy and gentleness, and mirth and love;
So let me fall like the pluck'd rose! — far better
Thus than be wither'd.
Myr. Then thou wilt not yield,
Even for the sake of all that ever stirr'd
A monarch into action, to forego
A trifling revel?
Sar. No.
Myr. Then yield for *mine;*
For my sake!
Sar. Thine, my Myrrha!
Myr. 'T is the first
Boon which I ever ask'd Assyria's king.
Sar. That 's true, and were 't my kingdom, must be granted.
Well, for thy sake, I yield me. Pania, hence!
Thou hear'st me.
Pan. And obey. [*Exit* Pania.
Sar. I marvel at thee.
What is thy motive, Myrrha, thus to urge me?
Myr. Thy safety; and the certainty that nought
Could urge the prince thy kinsman to require
Thus much from thee, but some impending danger.
Sar. And if I do not dread it, why shouldst thou?
Myr. Because *thou* dost not fear, I fear for *thee*.

Sar. To-morrow thou wilt smile at these vain fancies.
Myr. If the worst come, I shall be where none weep,
And that is better than the power to smile.
And thou?
Sar. I shall be king, as heretofore.
Myr. Where?
Sar. With Baal, Nimrod, and Semiramis,
Sole in Assyria, or with them elsewhere.
Fate made me what I am — may make me nothing —
But either that or nothing must I be:
I will not live degraded.
Myr. Hadst thou felt
Thus always, none would ever dare degrade thee.
Sar. And who will do so now?
Myr. Dost thou suspect none?
Sar. Suspect! — that 's a spy's office. Oh, we lose
Ten thousand precious moments in vain words,
And vainer fears. Within there! — Ye slaves, deck
The hall of Nimrod for the evening revel:
If I must make a prison of our palace,
At least we 'll wear our fetters jocundly;
If the Euphrates be forbid us, and
The summer dwelling on its beauteous border,
Here we are still unmenaced. Ho! within there! [*Exit* SARDANAPALUS.
Myr. (*sola*). Why do I love this man? My country's daughters
Love none but heroes. But I have no country!
The slave hath lost all save her bonds. I love him;
And that 's the heaviest link of the long chain —
To love whom we esteem not. Be it so:
The hour is coming when he 'll need all love,
And find none. To fall from him now were baser
Than to have stabb'd him on his throne when highest
Would have been noble in my country's creed:
I was not made for either. Could I save him,
I should not love *him* better, but myself;
And I have need of the last, for I have fallen
In my own thoughts, by loving this soft stranger:
And yet methinks I love him more, perceiving
That he is hated of his own barbarians,
The natural foes of all the blood of Greece.
Could I but wake a single thought like those
Which even the Phrygians felt when battling long
'Twixt Ilion and the sea, within his heart,
He would tread down the barbarous crowds, and triumph.
He loves me, and I love him; the slave loves
Her master, and would free him from his vices.
If not, I have a means of freedom still,
And if I cannot teach him how to reign,
May show him how alone a king can leave
His throne. I must not lose him from my sight. [*Exit.*

ACT II

Scene I

The Portal of the same Hall of the Palace.

Beleses (*solus*). The sun goes down: methinks he sets more slowly,
Taking his last look of Assyria's empire.
How red he glares amongst those deepening clouds,
Like the blood he predicts. If not in vain,
Thou sun that sinkest, and ye stars which rise,
I have outwatch'd ye, reading ray by ray
The edicts of your orbs, which make Time tremble
For what he brings the nations, 't is the furthest
Hour of Assyria's years. And yet how calm!
An earthquake should announce so great a fall —
A summer's sun discloses it. Yon disk,
To the star-read Chaldean, bears upon
Its everlasting page the end of what
Seem'd everlasting; but oh! thou true sun!
The burning oracle of all that live,
As fountain of all life, and symbol of
Him who bestows it, wherefore dost thou limit
Thy lore unto calamity? Why not
Unfold the rise of days more worthy thine

All-glorious burst from ocean? why not dart
A beam of hope athwart the future years,
As of wrath to its days? Hear me! oh, hear me!
I am thy worshipper, thy priest, thy servant —
I have gazed on thee at thy rise and fall,
And bow’d my head beneath thy mid-day beams,
When my eye dared not meet thee. I have watch’d
For thee, and after thee, and pray’d to thee,
And sacrificed to thee, and read, and fear’d thee,
And ask’d of thee, and thou hast answer’d — but
Only to thus much. While I speak, he sinks —
Is gone — and leaves his beauty, not his knowledge,
To the delighted west, which revels in
Its hues of dying glory. Yet what is
Death, so it be but glorious? ’T is a sunset;
And mortals may be happy to resemble
The gods but in decay.

Enter Arbaces, *by an inner door.*

Arb. Beleses, why
So rapt in thy devotions? Dost thou stand
Gazing to trace thy disappearing god
Into some realm of undiscover’d day?
Our business is with night — ’t is come.
Bel. But not
Gone.
Arb. Let it roll on — we are ready.
Bel. Yes.
Would it were over!
Arb. Does the prophet doubt,
To whom the very stars shine victory?
Bel. I do not doubt of victory — but the victor.
Arb. Well, let thy science settle that. Meantime
I have prepared as many glittering spears
As will out-sparkle our allies — your planets.
There is no more to thwart us. The she-king,
That less than woman, is even now upon
The waters with his female mates. The order
Is issued for the feast in the pavilion.
The first cup which he drains will be the last
Quaff’d by the line of Nimrod.
Bel. ’T was a brave one.
Arb. And is a weak one — ’t is worn out — we ’ll mend it.
Bel. Art sure of that?
Arb. Its founder was a hunter —
I am a soldier — what is there to fear?
Bel. The soldier.
Arb. And the priest, it may be: but
If you thought thus, or think, why not retain
Your king of concubines? why stir me up?
Why spur me to this enterprise? your own
No less than mine?
Bel. Look to the sky!
Arb. I look.
Bel. What seest thou?
Arb. A fair summer’s twilight, and
The gathering of the stars.
Bel. And midst them, mark
Yon earliest, and the brightest, which so quivers
As it would quit its place in the blue ether.
Arb. Well?
Bel. ’T is thy natal ruler — thy birth planet.
Arb. (*touching his scabbard*). My star is in this scabbard: when it shines,
It shall out-dazzle comets. Let us think
Of what is to be done to justify
Thy planets and their portents. When we conquer,
They shall have temples — ay, and priests; and thou
Shalt be the pontiff of — what gods thou wilt;
For I observe that they are ever just,
And own the bravest for the most devout.
Bel. Ay, and the most devout for brave — thou hast not
Seen me turn back from battle.
Arb. No; I own thee
As firm in fight as Babylonia’s captain,
As skilful in Chaldea’s worship: now,
Will it but please thee to forget the priest,
And be the warrior?
Bel. Why not both?
Arb. The better;
And yet it almost shames me, we shall have
So little to effect. This woman’s warfare
Degrades the very conqueror. To have pluck’d
A bold and bloody despot from his throne,
And grappled with him, clashing steel with steel,

That were heroic or to win or fall;
But to upraise my sword against this silkworm,
And hear him whine, it may be —
Bel. Do not deem it:
He has that in him which may make you strife yet;
And were he all you think, his guards are hardy,
And headed by the cool, stern Salemenes.
Arb. They 'll not resist.
Bel. Why not? they are soldiers.
Arb. True,
And therefore need a soldier to command them.
Bel. That Salemenes is.
Arb. But not their king.
Besides, he hates the effeminate thing that governs,
For the queen's sake, his sister. Mark you not
He keeps aloof from all the revels?
Bel. But
Not from the council — there he is ever constant.
Arb. And ever thwarted: what would you have more
To make a rebel out of? A fool reigning,
His blood dishonour'd, and himself disdain'd:
Why, it is *his* revenge we work for.
Bel. Could
He but be brought to think so: this I doubt of.
Arb. What, if we sound him?
Bel. Yes — if the time served.

Enter Balea.

Bal. Satraps! The king commands your presence at
The feast to-night.
Bel. To hear is to obey.
In the pavilion?
Bal. No; here in the palace.
Arb. How! in the palace? it was not thus order'd.
Bal. It is so order'd now.
Arb. And why?
Bal. I know not.
May I retire?
Arb. Stay.
Bel. (*to Arb. aside*). Hush! let him go his way.
(*Alternately to Bal.*) Yes, Balea, thank the monarch, kiss the hem
Of his imperial robe, and say, his slaves
Will take the crumbs he deigns to scatter from
His royal table at the hour — was 't midnight?
Bal. It was: the place, the hall of Nimrod. Lords,
I humble me before you, and depart.
[*Exit* Balea.
Arb. I like not this same sudden change of place;
There is some mystery: wherefore should he change it?
Bel. Doth he not change a thousand times a day?
Sloth is of all things the most fanciful —
And moves more parasangs in its intents
Than generals in their marches, when they seek
To leave their foe at fault. — Why dost thou muse?
Arb. He loved that gay pavilion, — it was ever
His summer dotage.
Bel. And he loved his queen —
And thrice a thousand harlotry besides —
And he has loved all things by turns, except
Wisdom and glory.
Arb. Still — I like it not.
If he has changed — why, so must we: the attack
Were easy in the isolated bower,
Beset with drowsy guards and drunken courtiers;
But in the hall of Nimrod —
Bel. Is it so?
Methought the haughty soldier fear'd to mount
A throne too easily — does it disappoint thee
To find there is a slipperier step or two
Than what was counted on?
Arb. When the hour comes,
Thou shalt perceive how far I fear or no.
Thou hast seen my life at stake — and gaily play'd for:
But here is more upon the die — a kingdom.
Bel. I have foretold already — thou wilt win it:
Then on, and prosper.
Arb. Now, were I a soothsayer,

I would have boded so much to myself.
But be the stars obey'd — I cannot quarrel
With them, nor their interpreter. Who 's here ?

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. Satraps !
Bel. My prince !
Sal. Well met — I sought ye both,
But elsewhere than the palace.
Arb. Wherefore so ?
Sal. 'T is not the hour.
Arb. The hour ! — what hour ?
Sal. Of midnight.
Bel. Midnight, my lord !
Sal. What, are you not invited ?
Bel. Oh ! yes — we had forgotten.
Sal. Is it usual
Thus to forget a sovereign's invitation ?
Arb. Why — we but now received it.
Sal. Then why here ?
Arb. On duty.
Sal. On what duty ?
Bel. On the state's.
We have the privilege to approach the presence;
But found the monarch absent.
Sal. And I too
Am upon duty.
Arb. May we crave its purport ?
Sal. To arrest two traitors. Guards ! Within there !

Enter Guards.

Sal. (*continuing*). Satraps,
Your swords.
Bel. (*delivering his*). My lord, behold my scimitar.
Arb. (*drawing his sword*). Take mine.
Sal. (*advancing*). I will.
Arb. But in your heart the blade —
The hilt quits not this hand.
Sal. (*drawing*). How ! dost thou brave me ?
'T is well — this saves a trial, and false mercy.
Soldiers, hew down the rebel !
Arb. Soldiers ! Ay —
Alone you dare not.
Sal. Alone ! foolish slave —
What is there in thee that a prince should shrink from
Of open force ? We dread thy treason, not
Thy strength: thy tooth is nought without its venom —
The serpent's, not the lion's. Cut him down.
Bel. (*interposing*). Arbaces ! are you mad ? Have I not render'd
My sword ? Then trust like me our sovereign's justice.
Arb. No — I will sooner trust the stars thou prat'st of,
And this slight arm, and die a king at least
Of my own breath and body — so far that
None else shall chain them.
Sal. (*to the Guards*). You hear *him*, and *me*.
Take him not, — kill.

[*The Guards attack* ARBACES, *who defends himself valiantly and dexterously till they waver.*

Sal. Is it even so; and must
I do the hangman's office ? Recreants ! see
How you should fell a traitor.

[SALEMENES *attacks* ARBACES.

Enter SARDANAPALUS *and Train.*

Sar. Hold your hands —
Upon your lives, I say. What, deaf or drunken ?
My sword ! O fool, I wear no sword: here, fellow,
Give me thy weapon. [*To a Guard.*

[SARDANAPALUS *snatches a sword from one of the soldiers, and rushes between the combatants — they separate.*

Sar. In my very palace !
What hinders me from cleaving you in twain,
Audacious brawlers ?
Bel. Sire, your justice.
Sal. Or —
Your weakness.
Sar. (*raising his sword*). How ?
Sal. Strike ! so the blow 's repeated
Upon yon traitor — whom you spare a moment,
I trust, for torture — I 'm content.
Sar. What — him !
Who dares assail Arbaces ?
Sal. I !
Sar. Indeed !
Prince, you forget yourself. Upon what warrant ?
Sal. (*showing the signet*). Thine.
Arb. (*confused*). The king's !
Sal. Yes ! and let the king confirm it.
Sar. I parted not from this for such a purpose.
Sal. You parted with it for your safety — I

Employ'd it for the best. Pronounce in person.
Here I am but your slave — a moment past
I was your representative.
Sar. Then sheathe
Your swords.

[ARBACES *and* SALEMENES *return their swords to the scabbards.*

Sal. Mine 's sheathed: I pray you sheathe *not* yours:
'T is the sole sceptre left you now with safety.
Sar. A heavy one; the hilt, too, hurts my hand.
(*To a Guard.*) Here, fellow, take thy weapon back.
Well, sirs,
What doth this mean?
Bel. The prince must answer that.
Sal. Truth upon my part, treason upon theirs.
Sar. Treason — Arbaces! treachery and Beleses!
That were an union I will not believe.
Bel. Where is the proof?
Sal. I 'll answer that, if once
The king demands your fellow-traitor's sword.
Arb. (*to Sal.*). A sword which hath been drawn as oft as thine
Against his foes.
Sal. And now against his brother,
And in an hour or so against himself.
Sar. That is not possible: he dared not; no —
No — I 'll not hear of such things. These vain bickerings
Are spawn'd in courts by base intrigues, and baser
Hirelings, who live by lies on good men's lives.
You must have been deceived, my brother.
Sal. First
Let him deliver up his weapon, and
Proclaim himself your subject by that duty,
And I will answer all.
Sar. Why, if I thought so —
But no, it cannot be: the Mede Arbaces —
The trusty, rough, true soldier — the best captain
Of all who discipline our nations — No,
I 'll not insult him thus, to bid him render
The scimitar to me he never yielded
Unto our enemies. Chief, keep your weapon.
Sal. (*delivering back the signet*). Monarch, take back your signet.
Sar. No, retain it;
But use it with more moderation.
Sal. Sire,
I used it for your honour, and restore it
Because I cannot keep it with my own.
Bestow it on Arbaces.
Sar. So I should:
He never ask'd it.
Sal. Doubt not, he will have it,
Without that hollow semblance of respect.
Bel. I know not what hath prejudiced the prince
So strongly 'gainst two subjects, than whom none
Have been more zealous for Assyria's weal.
Sal. Peace, factious priest, and faithless soldier! thou
Unit'st in thy own person the worst vices
Of the most dangerous orders of mankind.
Keep thy smooth words and juggling homilies
For those who know thee not. Thy fellow's sin
Is, at the least, a bold one, and not temper'd
By the tricks taught thee in Chaldea.
Bel. Hear him,
My liege — the son of Belus! he blasphemes
The worship of the land, which bows the knee
Before your fathers.
Sar. Oh! for that I pray you
Let him have absolution. I dispense with
The worship of dead men; feeling that I
Am mortal, and believing that the race
From whence I sprung are — what I see them — ashes.
Bel. King! do not deem so: they are with the stars,
And —
Sar. You shall join them there ere they will rise,
If you preach farther — Why, *this* is rank treason.
Sal. My lord!
Sar. To school me in the worship of
Assyria's idols! Let him be released —
Give him his sword.
Sal. My lord, and king, and brother,
I pray ye pause.
Sar. Yes, and be sermonised,

And dinn'd, and deafen'd with dead men and Baal,
And all Chaldea's starry mysteries.
Bel. Monarch! respect them.
Sar. Oh, for that — I love them:
I love to watch them in the deep blue vault,
And to compare them with my Myrrha's eyes;
I love to see their rays redoubled in
The tremulous silver of Euphrates' wave,
As the light breeze of midnight crisps the broad
And rolling water, sighing through the sedges
Which fringe his banks: but whether they may be
Gods, as some say, or the abodes of gods,
As others hold, or simply lamps of night,
Worlds, or the lights of worlds, I know nor care not.
There 's something sweet in my uncertainty
I would not change for your Chaldean lore;
Besides, I know of these all clay can know
Of aught above it, or below it — nothing.
I see their brilliancy and feel their beauty —
When they shine on my grave I shall know neither.
Bel. For *neither*, sire, say *better*.
Sar. I will wait,
If it so please you, pontiff, for that knowledge.
In the mean time receive your sword, and know
That I prefer your service militant
Unto your ministry — not loving either.
Sal. (*aside*). His lusts have made him mad. Then must I save him,
Spite of himself.
Sar. Please you to hear me, Satraps!
And chiefly thou, my priest, because I doubt thee
More than the soldier; and would doubt thee all
Wert thou not half a warrior: let us part
In peace — I 'll not say pardon — which must be
Earn'd by the guilty; this I 'll not pronounce ye,
Although upon this breath of mine depends
Your own; and, deadlier for ye, on my fears.
But fear not — for that I am soft, not fearful —
And so live on. Were I the thing some think me,
Your heads would now be dripping the last drops
Of their attainted gore from the high gates
Of this our palace, into the dry dust,
Their only portion of the coveted kingdom
They would be crown'd to reign o'er — let that pass.
As I have said, I will not *deem* ye guilty,
Nor *doom* ye guiltless; albeit better men
Than ye or I stand ready to arraign you.
And should I leave your fate to sterner judges,
And proofs of all kinds, I might sacrifice
Two men, who, whatsoe'er they now are, were
Once honest. Ye are free, sirs.
Arb. Sire, this clemency —
Bel. (*interrupting him*). Is worthy of yourself; and, although innocent,
We thank —
Sar. Priest! keep your thanksgivings for Belus;
His offspring needs none.
Bel. But being innocent —
Sar. Be silent — Guilt is loud. If ye are loyal,
Ye are injured men, and should be sad, not grateful.
Bel. So we should be, were justice always done
By earthly power omnipotent; but innocence
Must oft receive her right as a mere favour.
Sar. That 's a good sentence for a homily,
Though not for this occasion. Prithee keep it
To plead thy sovereign's cause before his people.
Bel. I trust there is no cause.
Sar. No *cause*, perhaps,
But many causers: — if ye meet with such
In the exercise of your inquisitive function
On earth, or should you read of it in heaven
In some mysterious twinkle of the stars,
Which are your chronicles, I pray you note,
That there are worse things betwixt earth and heaven
Than him who ruleth many and slays none;
And, hating not himself, yet loves his fellows
Enough to spare even those who would not spare him

Were they once masters — but that 's doubtful. Satraps!
Your swords and persons are at liberty
To use them as ye will — but from this hour
I have no call for either. Salemenes!
Follow me.

[*Exeunt* SARDANAPALUS, SALEMENES, *and the Train, etc., leaving* ARBACES *and* BELESES.

Arb. Beleses!
Bel. Now, what think you?
Arb. That we are lost.
Bel. That we have won the kingdom.
Arb. What! thus suspected — with the sword slung o'er us
But by a single hair, and that still wavering,
To be blown down by his imperious breath
Which spared us — why, I know not.
Bel. Seek not why;
But let us profit by the interval.
The hour is still our own — our power the same —
The night the same we destined. He hath changed
Nothing except our ignorance of all
Suspicion into such a certainty
As must make madness of delay.
Arb. And yet —
Bel. What, doubting still?
Arb. He spared our lives, nay, more,
Saved them from Salemenes.
Bel. And how long
Will he so spare? till the first drunken minute.
Arb. Or sober, rather. Yet he did it nobly;
Gave royally what we had forfeited
Basely —
Bel. Say, bravely.
Arb. Somewhat of both, perhaps.
But it has touch'd me, and, whate'er betide,
I will no further on.
Bel. And lose the world!
Arb. Lose anything except my own esteem.
Bel. I blush that we should owe our lives to such
A king of distaffs!
Arb. But no less we owe them;
And I should blush far more to take the grantor's!
Bel. Thou may'st endure whate'er thou wilt — the stars
Have written otherwise.
Arb. Though they came down
And marshall'd me the way in all their brightness,
I would not follow.
Bel. This is weakness — worse
Than a scared beldam's dreaming of the dead
And waking in the dark. — Go to — go to.
Arb. Methought he look'd like Nimrod as he spoke,
Even as the proud imperial statue stands
Looking the monarch of the kings around it,
And sways, while they but ornament, the temple.
Bel. I told you that you had too much despised him,
And that there was some royalty within him —
What then? he is the nobler foe.
Arb. But we
The meaner. — Would he had not spared us!
Bel. So —
Wouldst thou be sacrificed thus readily?
Arb. No — but it had been better to have died
Than live ungrateful.
Bel. Oh, the souls of some men!
Thou wouldst digest what some call treason, and
Fools treachery — and, behold, upon the sudden,
Because for something or for nothing this
Rash reveller steps ostentatiously
'Twixt thee and Salemenes, thou art turn'd
Into — what shall I say? — Sardanapalus!
I know no name more ignominious.
Arb. But
An hour ago, who dared to term me such
Had held his life but lightly — as it is,
I must forgive you, even as he forgave us —
Semiramis herself would not have done it.
Bel. No — the queen liked no sharers of the kingdom,
Not even a husband.
Arb. I must serve him truly —
Bel. And humbly?
Arb. No, sir, proudly — being honest.
I shall be nearer thrones than you to heaven;
And if not quite so haughty, yet more lofty.
You may do your own deeming — you have codes,
And mysteries, and corollaries of

Right and wrong which I lack for my direction,
And must pursue but what a plain heart teaches.
And now you know me.
Bel. Have you finish'd?
Arb. Yes —
With you.
Bel. And would, perhaps, betray as well
As quit me?
Arb. That 's a sacerdotal thought,
And not a soldier's.
Bel. Be it what you will —
Truce with these wranglings, and but hear me.
Arb. No —
There is more peril in your subtle spirit
Than in a phalanx.
Bel. If it must be so —
I 'll on alone.
Arb. Alone!
Bel. Thrones hold but one.
Arb. But this is fill'd.
Bel. With worse than vacancy —
A despised monarch. Look to it, Arbaces:
I have still aided, cherish'd, loved, and urged you;
Was willing even to serve you, in the hope
To serve and save Assyria. Heaven itself
Seem'd to consent, and all events were friendly,
Even to the last, till that your spirit shrunk
Into a shallow softness; but now, rather
Than see my country languish, I will be
Her saviour or the victim of her tyrant,
Or one or both, for sometimes both are one;
And if I win, Arbaces is my servant.
Arb. *Your* servant!
Bel. Why not? better than be slave,
The *pardon'd* slave of *she* Sardanapalus!

Enter PANIA.

Pan. My lords, I bear an order from the king.
Arb. It is obey'd ere spoken.
Bel. Notwithstanding,
Let 's hear it.
Pan. Forthwith, on this very night,
Repair to your respective satrapies
Of Babylon and Media.
Bel. With our troops?
Pan. My order is unto the satraps and
Their household train.
Arb. But —
Bel. It must be obey'd:
Say, we depart.
Pan. My order is to see you
Depart, and not to bear your answer.
Bel. (*aside*). Ay!
Well, sir, we will accompany you hence.
Pan. I will retire to marshal forth the guard
Of honour which befits your rank, and wait
Your leisure, so that it the hour exceeds not. [*Exit* PANIA.
Bel. Now then obey!
Arb. Doubtless.
Bel. Yes, to the gates
That grate the palace, which is now our prison —
No further.
Arb. Thou hast harp'd the truth indeed!
The realm itself, in all its wide extension,
Yawns dungeons at each step for thee and me.
Bel. Graves!
Arb. If I thought so, this good sword should dig
One more than mine.
Bel. It shall have work enough.
Let me hope better than thou augurest;
At present, let us hence as best we may.
Thou dost agree with me in understanding
This order as a sentence?
Arb. Why, what other
Interpretation should it bear? it is
The very policy of orient monarchs —
Pardon and poison — favours and a sword —
A distant voyage and an eternal sleep.
How many satraps in his father's time —
For he I own is, or at least *was*, bloodless —
Bel. But *will* not, *can* not be so now.
Arb. I doubt it.
How many satraps have I seen set out
In his sire's day for mighty vice-royalties,
Whose tombs are on their path! I know not how,
But they all sicken'd by the way, it was
So long and heavy.
Bel. Let us but regain
The free air of the city, and we 'll shorten
The journey.
Arb. 'T will be shorten'd at the gates,
It may be.
Bel. No; they hardly will risk that.
They mean us to die privately, but not
Within the palace or the city walls,

Where we are known and may have partisans:
If they had meant to slay us here, we were
No longer with the living. Let us hence.
Arb. If I but thought he did not mean my life —
Bel. Fool! hence — what else should despotism alarm'd
Mean? Let us but rejoin our troops, and march.
Arb. Towards our provinces?
Bel. No; towards your kingdom.
There 's time, there 's heart, and hope, and power, and means,
Which their half measures leave us in full scope. —
Away!
Arb. And I even yet repenting must
Relapse to guilt!
Bel. Self-defence is a virtue,
Sole bulwark of all right. Away, I say!
Let 's leave this place, the air grows thick and choking,
And the walls have a scent of night-shade — hence!
Let us not leave them time for further counsel.
Our quick departure proves our civic zeal;
Our quick departure hinders our good escort,
The worthy Pania, from anticipating
The orders of some parasangs from hence:
Nay, there 's no other choice, but — hence, I say.
[*Exit with* ARBACES, *who follows reluctantly.*

Enter SARDANAPALUS *and* SALEMENES.

Sar. Well, all is remedied, and without bloodshed,
That worst of mockeries of a remedy;
We are now secure by these men's exile.
Sal. Yes,
As he who treads on flowers is from the adder
Twined round their roots.
Sar. Why, what wouldst have me do?
Sal. Undo what you have done.
Sar. Revoke my pardon?
Sal. Replace the crown now tottering on your temples.
Sar. That were tyrannical.
Sal. But sure.
Sar. We are so.
What danger can they work upon the frontier?
Sal. They are not there yet — never should they be so,
Were I well listen'd to.
Sar. Nay, I *have* listen'd
Impartially to thee — why not to them?
Sal. You may know that hereafter; as it is,
I take my leave to order forth the guard.
Sar. And you will join us at the banquet?
Sal. Sire,
Dispense with me — I am no wassailer:
Command me in all service save the Bacchant's.
Sar. Nay, but 't is fit to revel now and then.
Sal. And fit that some should watch for those who revel
Too oft. Am I permitted to depart?
Sar. Yes — Stay a moment, my good Salemenes,
My brother, my best subject, better prince
Than I am king. You should have been the monarch,
And I — I know not what, and care not; but
Think not I am insensible to all
Thine honest wisdom, and thy rough yet kind,
Though oft reproving, sufferance of my follies.
If I have spared these men against thy counsel,
That is, their lives — it is not that I doubt
The advice was sound; but, let them live: we will not
Cavil about their lives — so let them mend them.
Their banishment will leave me still sound sleep,
Which their death had not left me.
Sal. Thus you run
The risk to sleep for ever, to save traitors —
A moment's pang now changed for years of crime.
Still let them be made quiet.
Sar. Tempt me not:
My word is past.
Sal. But it may be recall'd.
Sar. 'T is royal.
Sal. And should therefore be decisive.
This half indulgence of an exile serves
But to provoke — a pardon should be full,
Or it is none.
Sar. And who persuaded me
After I had repeal'd them, or at least

Only dismiss'd them from our presence, who
Urged me to send them to their satrapies?
Sal. True; that I had forgotten; that is, sire,
If they e'er reach'd their satrapies — why, then,
Reprove me more for my advice.
Sar. And if
They do not reach them — look to it! — in safety,
In safety, mark me — and security —
Look to thine own.
Sal. Permit me to depart;
Their *safety* shall be cared for.
Sar. Get thee hence, then;
And, prithee, think more gently of thy brother.
Sal. Sire, I shall ever duly serve my sovereign. [*Exit* SALEMENES.
Sar. (*solus*). That man is of a temper too severe;
Hard, but as lofty as the rock, and free
From all the taints of common earth — while I
Am softer clay, impregnated with flowers:
But as our mould is, must the produce be.
If I have err'd this time, 't is on the side
Where error sits most lightly on that sense,
I know not what to call it; but it reckons
With me ofttimes for pain, and sometimes pleasure;
A spirit which seems placed about my heart
To count its throbs, not quicken them, and ask
Questions which mortal never dared to ask me,
Nor Baal, though an oracular deity —
Albeit his marble face majestical
Frowns as the shadows of the evening dim
His brows to changed expression, till at times
I think the statue looks in act to speak.
Away with these vain thoughts, I will be joyous —
And here comes Joy's true herald.

Enter MYRRHA.

Myr. King! the sky
Is overcast, and musters muttering thunder,
In clouds that seem approaching fast, and show
In forkèd flashes a commanding tempest.
Will you then quit the palace?
Sar. Tempest, say'st thou?
Myr. Ay, my good lord.
Sar. For my own part, I should be
Not ill content to vary the smooth scene,
And watch the warring elements; but this
Would little suit the silken garments and
Smooth faces of our festive friends. Say, Myrrha,
Art thou of those who dread the roar of clouds?
Myr. In my own country we respect their voices
As auguries of Jove.
Sar. Jove! — ay, your Baal —
Ours also has a property in thunder,
And ever and anon some falling bolt
Proves his divinity, — and yet sometimes
Strikes his own altars.
Myr. That were a dread omen.
Sar. Yes — for the priests. Well, we will not go forth
Beyond the palace walls to-night, but make
Our feast within.
Myr. Now, Jove be praised! that he
Hath heard the prayer thou wouldst not hear. The gods
Are kinder to thee than thou to thyself,
And flash this storm between thee and thy foes,
To shield thee from them.
Sar. Child, if there be peril,
Methinks it is the same within these walls
As on the river's brink.
Myr. Not so; these walls
Are high, and strong, and guarded. Treason has
To penetrate through many a winding way
And massy portal; but in the pavilion
There is no bulwark.
Sar. No, nor in the palace,
Nor in the fortress, nor upon the top
Of cloud-fenced Caucasus, where the eagle sits
Nested in pathless clefts, if treachery be:
Even as the arrow finds the airy king,
The steel will reach the earthly. But be calm:
The men, or innocent or guilty, are
Banish'd, and far upon their way.
Myr. They live, then?
Sar. So sanguinary? *Thou!*
Myr. I would not shrink
From just infliction of due punishment
On those who seek your life: were 't otherwise,

I should not merit mine. Besides, you heard
The princely Salemenes.
Sar. This is strange;
The gentle and the austere are both against me,
And urge me to revenge.
Myr. ’T is a Greek virtue.
Sar. But not a kingly one — I ’ll none on ’t; or
If ever I indulge in ’t, it shall be
With kings — my equals.
Myr. These men sought to be so.
Sar. Myrrha, this is too feminine, and springs
From fear —
Myr. For you.
Sar. No matter, still ’t is fear.
I have observed your sex, once roused to wrath,
Are timidly vindictive to a pitch
Of perseverance which I would not copy.
I thought you were exempt from this, as from
The childish helplessness of Asian women.
Myr. My lord, I am no boaster of my love,
Nor of my attributes; I have shared your splendour,
And will partake your fortunes. You may live
To find one slave more true than subject myriads:
But this the gods avert! I am content
To be beloved on trust for what I feel,
Rather than prove it to you in your griefs
Which might not yield to any cares of mine.
Sar. Grief cannot come where perfect love exists,
Except to heighten it, and vanish from
That which it could not scare away. Let ’s in —
The hour approaches, and we must prepare
To meet the invited guests who grace our feast. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III

SCENE I

The Hall of the Palace illuminated. — SARDANAPALUS *and his Guests at Table.* — *A Storm without, and Thunder occasionally heard during the Banquet.*

Sar. Fill full! why this is as it should be: here
Is my true realm, amidst bright eyes and faces
Happy as fair! Here sorrow cannot reach.
Zam. Nor elsewhere; where the king is, pleasure sparkles.
Sar. Is not this better now than Nimrod’s huntings,
Or my wild grandam’s chase in search of kingdoms
She could not keep when conquer’d?
Alt. Mighty though
They were, as all thy royal line have been,
Yet none of those who went before have reach’d
The acme of Sardanapalus, who
Has placed his joy in peace — the sole true glory.
Sar. And pleasure, good Altada, to which glory
Is but the path. What is it that we seek?
Enjoyment! We have cut the way short to it,
And not gone tracking it through human ashes,
Making a grave with every footstep.
Zam. No;
All hearts are happy, and all voices bless
The king of peace, who holds a world in jubilee.
Sar. Art sure of that? I have heard otherwise;
Some say that there be traitors.
Zam. Traitors they
Who dare to say so! — ’T is impossible.
What cause?
Sar. What cause? true, — fill the goblet up;
We will not think of them: there are none such,
Or if there be, they are gone.
Alt. Guests, to my pledge!
Down on your knees, and drink a measure to
The safety of the king — the monarch, say I?
The god Sardanapalus!
[ZAMES *and the Guests kneel, and exclaim* —
Mightier than
His father Baal, the god Sardanapalus!
[*It thunders as they kneel; some start up in confusion.*
Zam. Why do you rise, my friends? in that strong peal
His father gods consented.
Myr. Menaced, rather.
King, wilt thou bear this mad impiety?
Sar. Impiety! — nay, if the sires who reign’d
Before me can be gods, I ’ll not disgrace

Their lineage. But arise, my pious friends;
Hoard your devotion for the thunderer there:
I seek but to be loved, not worshipp'd.
Alt. Both —
Both you must ever be by all true subjects.
Sar. Methinks the thunders still increase: it is
An awful night.
Myr. Oh yes, for those who have
No palace to protect their worshippers.
Sar. That 's true, my Myrrha; and could I convert
My realm to one wide shelter for the wretched,
I 'd do it.
Myr. Thou 'rt no god, then, not to be
Able to work a will so good and general
As thy wish would imply.
Sar. And your gods, then,
Who can and do not?
Myr. Do not speak of that,
Lest we provoke them.
Sar. True, they love not censure
Better than mortals. Friends, a thought has struck me:
Were there no temples, would there, think ye, be
Air worshippers? that is, when it is angry
And pelting as even now.
Myr. The Persian prays
Upon his mountain.
Sar. Yes, when the sun shines.
Myr. And I would ask, if this your palace were
Unroof'd and desolate, how many flatterers
Would lick the dust in which the king lay low?
Alt. The fair Ionian is too sarcastic
Upon a nation whom she knows not well;
The Assyrians know no pleasure but their king's,
And homage is their pride.
Sar. Nay, pardon, guests,
The fair Greek's readiness of speech.
Alt. *Pardon!* sire:
We honour her of all things next to thee.
Hark! what was that?
Zam. That! nothing but the jar
Of distant portals shaken by the wind.
Alt. It sounded like the clash of — hark again!
Zam. The big rain pattering on the roof.
Sar. No more.
Myrrha, my love, hast thou thy shell in order?
Sing me a song of Sappho, her, thou know'st,
Who in thy country threw —

Enter PANIA, *with his sword and garments bloody and disordered. The Guests rise in confusion.*

Pan. (*to the Guards*). Look to the portals;
And with your best speed to the walls without.
Your arms! To arms! The king 's in danger. Monarch!
Excuse this haste, — 't is faith.
Sar. Speak on.
Pan. It is
As Salemenes fear'd; the faithless satraps —
Sar. You are wounded — give some wine. Take breath, good Pania.
Pan. 'T is nothing — a mere flesh wound. I am worn
More with my speed to warn my sovereign,
Than hurt in his defence.
Myr. Well, sir, the rebels?
Pan. Soon as Arbaces and Beleses reach'd
Their stations in the city, they refused
To march; and on my attempt to use the power
Which I was delegated with, they call'd
Upon their troops, who rose in fierce defiance.
Myr. All?
Pan. Too many.
Sar. Spare not of thy free speech,
To spare mine ears the truth.
Pan. My own slight guard
Were faithful, and what 's left of it is still so.
Myr. And are these all the force still faithful?
Pan. No —
The Bactrians, now led on by Salemenes,
Who even then was on his way, still urged
By strong suspicion of the Median chiefs,
Are numerous, and make strong head against
The rebels, fighting inch by inch, and forming
An orb around the palace, where they mean
To centre all their force and save the king.
(*He hesitates.*) I am charged to —
Myr. 'T is no time for hesitation.

Pan. Prince Salemenes doth implore the king
To arm himself, although but for a moment,
And show himself unto the soldiers: his
Sole presence in this instant might do more
Than hosts can do in his behalf.
Sar. What, ho!
My armour there.
Myr. And wilt thou?
Sar. Will I not?
Ho, there! — But seek not for the buckler: 't is
Too heavy: — a light cuirass and my sword.
Where are the rebels?
Pan. Scarce a furlong's length
From the outward wall the fiercest conflict rages.
Sar. Then I may charge on horseback. Sfero, ho!
Order my horse out. — There is space enough
Even in our courts and by the outer gate,
To marshal half the horsemen of Arabia.
[*Exit* SFERO *for the armour.*
Myr. How I do love thee!
Sar. I ne'er doubted it.
Myr. But now I know thee.
Sar. (*to his Attendant*). Bring down my spear too, —
Where 's Salemenes?
Pan. Where a soldier should be,
In the thick of the fight.
Sar. Then hasten to him — Is
The path still open, and communication
Left 'twixt the palace and the phalanx?
Pan. 'T was
When I late left him, and I have no fear:
Our troops were steady, and the phalanx form'd.
Sar. Tell him to spare his person for the present,
And that I will not spare my own — and say,
I come.
Pan. There 's victory in the very word.
[*Exit* PANIA.
Sar. Altada — Zames — forth, and arm ye! There
Is all in readiness in the armoury.
See that the women are bestow'd in safety
In the remote apartments: let a guard
Be set before them, with strict charge to quit
The post but with their lives — command it, Zames.
Altada, arm yourself and return here;
Your post is near our person.
[*Exeunt* ZAMES, ALTADA, *and all save* MYRRHA.

Enter SFERO *and others with the King's Arms, etc.*

Sfe. King! your armour.
Sar. (*arming himself*). Give me the cuirass — so: my baldric; now
My sword: I had forgot the helm — where is it?
That 's well — no, 't is too heavy: you mistake, too —
It was not this I meant, but that which bears
A diadem around it.
Sfe. Sire, I deem'd
That too conspicuous from the precious stones
To risk your sacred brow beneath — and trust me,
This is of better metal, though less rich.
Sar. You deem'd! Are you too turn'd a rebel? Fellow!
Your part is to obey: return, and — no —
It is too late — I will go forth without it.
Sfe. At least, wear this.
Sar. Wear Caucasus! why, 't is
A mountain on my temples.
Sfe. Sire, the meanest
Soldier goes not forth thus exposed to battle.
All men will recognise you — for the storm
Has ceased, and the moon breaks forth in her brightness.
Sar. I go forth to be recognised, and thus
Shall be so sooner. Now — my spear! I 'm arm'd.
[*In going stops short and turns to* SFERO.
Sfero — I had forgotten — bring the mirror.
Sfe. The mirror, sire?
Sar. Yes, sir, of polish'd brass,
Brought from the spoils of India — but be speedy.
[*Exit* SFERO.
Sar. Myrrha, retire unto a place of safety.
Why went you not forth with the other damsels?
Myr. Because my place is here.
Sar. And when I am gone —
Myr. I follow.
Sar. *You!* to battle?
Myr. If it were so,
'T were not the first Greek girl had trod the path.
I will await here your *return.*

Sar. The place
Is spacious, and the first to be sought out,
If they prevail; and, if it be so,
And I return not —
Myr. Still we meet again.
Sar. How?
Myr. In the spot where all must meet at last —
In Hades! if there be, as I believe,
A shore beyond the Styx: and if there be not,
In ashes.
Sar. Darest thou so much?
Myr. I dare all things,
Except survive what I have loved, to be
A rebel's booty: forth, and do your bravest.

Re-enter Sfero *with the mirror.*

Sar. (*looking at himself*). This cuirass fits me well, the baldric better,
And the helm not at all. Methinks I seem
[*Flings away the helmet after trying it again.*
Passing well in these toys; and now to prove them.
Altada! Where's Altada?
Sfe. Waiting, sire,
Without: he has your shield in readiness.
Sar. True; I forgot he is my shield-bearer
By right of blood, derived from age to age.
Myrrha, embrace me; — yet once more — once more —
Love me, whate'er betide. My chiefest glory
Shall be to make me worthier of your love.
Myr. Go forth, and conquer!
[*Exeunt* Sardanapalus *and* Sfero.
Now, I am alone.
All are gone forth, and of that all how few
Perhaps return. Let him but vanquish, and
Me perish! If he vanquish not, I perish;
For I will not outlive him. He has wound
About my heart, I know not how nor why.
Not for that he is king; for now his kingdom
Rocks underneath his throne, and the earth yawns
To yield him no more of it than a grave;
And yet I love him more. Oh, mighty Jove!
Forgive this monstrous love for a barbarian
Who knows not of Olympus! Yes, I love him
Now, now, far more than — Hark! — to the warshout!
Methinks it nears me. If it should be so,
[*She draws forth a small vial.*
This cunning Colchian poison, which my father
Learn'd to compound on Euxine shores, and taught me
How to preserve, shall free me! It had freed me
Long ere this hour, but that I loved until
I half forgot I was a slave: — where all
Are slaves save one, and proud of servitude,
So they are served in turn by something lower
In the degree of bondage, we forget
That shackles worn like ornaments no less
Are chains. Again that shout! and now the clash
Of arms — and now — and now —

Enter Altada.

Alt. Ho, Sfero, ho!
Myr. He is not here; what wouldst thou with him? How
Goes on the conflict?
Alt. Dubiously and fiercely.
Myr. And the king?
Alt. Like a king. I must find Sfero,
And bring him a new spear and his own helmet.
He fights till now bare-headed, and by far
Too much exposed. The soldiers knew his face,
And the foe too; and in the moon's broad light,
His silk tiara and his flowing hair
Make him a mark too royal. Every arrow
Is pointed at the fair hair and fair features,
And the broad fillet which crowns both.
Myr. Ye gods,
Who fulminate o'er my father's land, protect him!
Were you sent by the king?
Alt. By Salemenes,
Who sent me privily upon this charge,
Without the knowledge of the careless sovereign.
The king, the king fights as he revels. Ho!
What, Sfero! I will seek the armoury —
He must be there. [*Exit* Altada.
Myr. 'T is no dishonour — no —

'T is no dishonour to have loved this man.
I almost wish now, what I never wish'd
Before, that he were Grecian. If Alcides
Were shamed in wearing Lydian Omphale's
She-garb, and wielding her vile distaff, surely
He, who springs up a Hercules at once,
Nursed in effeminate arts from youth to manhood,
And rushes from the banquet to the battle
As though it were a bed of love, deserves
That a Greek girl should be his paramour,
And a Greek bard his minstrel, a Greek tomb
His monument. — How goes the strife, sir?

Enter an Officer.

Officer. Lost,
Lost almost past recovery. Zames! Where
Is Zames?
Myr. Posted with the guard appointed
To watch before the apartment of the women. [*Exit Officer.*
Myr. (*sola*). He 's gone; and told no more than that all 's lost!
What need have I to know more? In those words,
Those little words, a kingdom and a king,
A line of thirteen ages, and the lives
Of thousands, and the fortune of all left
With life, are merged; and I, too, with the great,
Like a small bubble breaking with the wave
Which bore it, shall be nothing. At the least,
My fate is in my keeping: no proud victor
Shall count me with his spoils.

Enter PANIA.

Pan. Away with me,
Myrrha, without delay; we must not lose
A moment — all that 's left us now.
Myr. The king?
Pan. Sent me here to conduct you hence, beyond
The river, by a secret passage.
Myr. Then
He lives —
Pan. And charged me to secure your life,
And beg you to live on for his sake till
He can rejoin you.
Myr. Will he then give way?
Pan. Not till the last. Still, still he does whate'er
Despair can do; and step by step disputes
The very palace.
Myr. They are here, then: — ay,
Their shouts come ringing through the ancient halls,
Never profaned by rebel echoes till
This fatal night. Farewell, Assyria's line!
Farewell to all of Nimrod! Even the name
Is now no more.
Pan. Away with me — away!
Myr. No: I 'll die here! — Away, and tell your king
I loved him to the last.

Enter SARDANAPALUS *and* SALEMENES *with Soldiers.* PANIA *quits* MYRRHA, *and ranges himself with them.*

Sar. Since it is thus,
We 'll die where we were born — in our own halls.
Serry your ranks — stand firm. I have despatch'd
A trusty satrap for the guard of Zames,
All fresh and faithful; they 'll be here anon.
All is not over. — Pania, look to Myrrha.
[PANIA *returns towards* MYRRHA.
Sal. We have breathing time: yet once more charge, my friends —
One for Assyria!
Sar. Rather say for Bactria!
My faithful Bactrians, I will henceforth be
King of your nation, and we'll hold together
This realm as province.
Sal. Hark! they come — they come.

Enter BELESES *and* ARBACES *with the Rebels.*

Arb. Set on, we have them in the toil. Charge! charge!
Bel. On! on! — Heaven fights for us, and with us — On!

[*They charge the King and* SALEMENES *with their Troops, who defend themselves till the Arrival of* ZAMES, *with the Guard before mentioned. The Rebels are then driven off, and pursued by* SALEMENES, *etc. As the King is going to join the pursuit,* BELESES *crosses him.*

Bel. Ho! tyrant — *I* will end this war,
Sar. Even so,
My warlike priest, and precious prophet, and
Grateful and trusty subject: yield, I pray thee.
I would reserve thee for a fitter doom,
Rather than dip my hands in holy blood.
Bel. Thine hour is come.

Sar. No, thine. — I 've lately read,
Though but a young astrologer, the stars;
And ranging round the zodiac, found thy fate
In the sign of the Scorpion, which proclaims
That thou wilt now be crush'd.
Bel. But not by thee.
[*They fight;* Beleses *is wounded and disarmed.*
Sar. (*raising his sword to despatch him, exclaims*) —
Now call upon thy planets, will they shoot
From the sky to preserve their seer and credit?

[*A party of Rebels enter and rescue* Beleses. *They assail the King, who, in turn, is rescued by a Party of his Soldiers, who drive the Rebels off.*

The villain was a prophet after all.
Upon them — ho! there — victory is ours.
[*Exit in pursuit.*
Myr. (*to Pan.*). Pursue! Why stand'st thou here, and leavest the ranks
Of fellow-soldiers conquering without thee?
Pan. The king's command was not to quit thee.
Myr. *Me!*
Think not of me — a single soldier's arm
Must not be wanting now. I ask no guard,
I need no guard: what, with a world at stake,
Keep watch upon a woman? Hence, I say,
Or thou art shamed! Nay, then, *I* will go forth,
A feeble female, 'midst their desperate strife,
And bid thee guard me *there* — where thou shouldst shield
Thy sovereign. [*Exit* Myrrha.
Pan. Yet stay, damsel! — She 's gone.
If aught of ill betide her, better I
Had lost my life. Sardanapalus holds her
Far dearer than his kingdom, yet he fights
For that too; and can I do less than he
Who never flash'd a scimitar till now?
Myrrha, return, and I obey you, though
In disobedience to the monarch. [*Exit* Pania.

Enter Altada *and* Sfero *by an opposite door.*

Alt. Myrrha!
What, gone? yet she was here when the fight raged,
And Pania also. Can aught have befallen them?
Sfe. I saw both safe, when late the rebels fled:
They probably are but retired to make
Their way back to the harem.
Alt. If the king
Prove victor, as it seems even now he must,
And miss his own Ionian, we are doom'd
To worse than captive rebels.
Sfe. Let us trace them;
She cannot be fled far; and, found, she makes
A richer prize to our soft sovereign
Than his recover'd kingdom.
Alt. Baal himself
Ne'er fought more fiercely to win empire, than
His silken son to save it: he defies
All augury of foes or friends; and like
The close and sultry summer's day, which bodes
A twilight tempest, bursts forth in such thunder
As sweeps the air and deluges the earth.
The man 's inscrutable.
Sfe. Not more than others.
All are the sons of circumstance: away —
Let 's seek the slave out, or prepare to be
Tortured for his infatuation, and
Condemn'd without a crime. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Salemenes *and Soldiers, etc.*

Sal. The triumph is
Flattering: they are beaten backward from the palace,
And we have open'd regular access
To the troops station'd on the other side
Euphrates, who may still be true; nay, must be,
When they hear of our victory. But where
Is the chief victor? where 's the king?

Enter Sardanapalus, *cum suis, etc., and* Myrrha.

Sar. Here, brother.
Sal. Unhurt, I hope.
Sar. Not quite; but let it pass.
We 've clear'd the palace —
Sal. And I trust the city.
Our numbers gather; and I 've order'd onward
A cloud of Parthians, hitherto reserved,
All fresh and fiery, to be pour'd upon them
In their retreat which soon will be a flight.
Sar. It is already, or at least they march'd
Faster than I could follow with my Bactrians,
Who spared no speed. I am spent: give me a seat.
Sal. There stands the throne, sire.

Sar. 'T is no place to rest on,
For mind nor body: let me have a couch,
[*They place a seat.*
A peasant's stool, I care not what: so — now
I breathe more freely.
Sal. This great hour has proved
The brightest and most glorious of your life.
Sar. And the most tiresome. Where 's my cupbearer?
Bring me some water.
Sal. (*smiling*). 'Tis the first time he
Ever had such an order: even I,
Your most austere of counsellors, would now
Suggest a purpler beverage.
Sar. Blood — doubtless.
But there 's enough of that shed; as for wine,
I have learn'd to-night the price of the pure element:
Thrice have I drank of it, and thrice renew'd,
With greater strength than the grape ever gave me,
My charge upon the rebels. Where 's the soldier
Who gave me water in his helmet?
One of the Guards. Slain, sire!
An arrow pierced his brain, while, scattering
The last drops from his helm, he stood in act
To place it on his brows.
Sar. Slain! unrewarded!
And slain to serve my thirst: that 's hard, poor slave!
Had he but lived, I would have gorged him with
Gold: all the gold of earth could ne'er repay
The pleasure of that draught; for I was parch'd
As I am now. [*They bring water — he drinks.*
I live again — from henceforth
The goblet I reserve for hours of love,
But war on water.
Sal. And that bandage, sire,
Which girds your arm?
Sar. A scratch from brave Beleses.
Myr. Oh, he is wounded!
Sar. Not too much of that;
And yet it feels a little stiff and painful,
Now I am cooler.
Myr. You have bound it with —
Sar. The fillet of my diadem: the first time
That ornament was ever aught to me,
Save an incumbrance.
Myr. (*to the Attendants*). Summon speedily
A leech of the most skilful: pray, retire:
I will unbind your wound and tend it.
Sar. Do so,
For now it throbs sufficiently: but what
Know'st thou of wounds? yet wherefore do I ask?
Know'st thou, my brother, where I lighted on
This minion?
Sal. Herding with the other females,
Like frighten'd antelopes.
Sar. No: like the dam
Of the young lion, femininely raging
(And femininely meaneth furiously,
Because all passions in excess are female),
Against the hunter flying with her cub,
She urged on with her voice and gesture, and
Her floating hair and flashing eyes, the soldiers
In the pursuit.
Sal. Indeed!
Sar. You see, this night
Made warriors of more than me. I paused
To look upon her, and her kindled cheek;
Her large black eyes, that flash'd through her long hair
As it stream'd o'er her; her blue veins that rose
Along her most transparent brow; her nostril
Dilated from its symmetry; her lips
Apart; her voice that clove through all the din,
As a lute's pierceth through the cymbal's clash,
Jarr'd but not drown'd by the loud brattling; her
Waved arms, more dazzling with their own born whiteness
Than the steel her hand held, which she caught up
From a dead soldier's grasp; — all these things made
Her seem unto the troops a prophetess
Of victory, or Victory herself,
Come down to hail us hers.
Sal. (*aside*). This is too much.
Again the love-fit 's on him, and all 's lost,
Unless we turn his thoughts.
(*Aloud.*) But pray thee, sire,
Think of your wound — you said even now 't was painful.

Sar. That's true, too; but I must not think of it.
Sal. I have look'd to all things needful, and will now
Receive reports of progress made in such
Orders as I had given, and then return
To hear your further pleasure.
Sar. Be it so.
Sal. (*in retiring*). Myrrha!
Myr. Prince!
Sal. You have shown a soul to-night,
Which, were he not my sister's lord — But now
I have no time: thou lovest the king?
Myr. I love
Sardanapalus.
Sal. But wouldst have him king still?
Myr. I would not have him less than what he should be.
Sal. Well then, to have him king, and yours, and all
He should or should not be; to have him *live*,
Let him not sink back into luxury.
You have more power upon his spirit than
Wisdom within these walls, or fierce rebellion
Raging without: look well that he relapse not.
Myr. There needed not the voice of Salemenes
To urge me on to this: I will not fail.
All that a woman's weakness can —
Sal. Is power
Omnipotent o'er such a heart as his:
Exert it wisely. [*Exit* Salemenes.
Sar. Myrrha! what, at whispers
With my stern brother? I shall soon be jealous.
Myr. (*smiling*). You have cause, sire; for on the earth there breathes not
A man more worthy of a woman's love,
A soldier's trust, a subject's reverence,
A king's esteem — the whole world's admiration!
Sar. Praise him, but not so warmly. I must not
Hear those sweet lips grow eloquent in aught
That throws me into shade; yet you speak truth.
Myr. And now retire, to have your wound look'd to.
Pray, lean on me.
Sar. Yes, love! but not from pain.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

ACT IV

Scene I

Sardanapalus *discovered sleeping upon a Couch, and occasionally disturbed in his Slumbers, with* Myrrha *watching.*

Myr. (*sola, gazing*). I have stolen upon his rest, if rest it be,
Which thus convulses slumber: shall I wake him?
No, he seems calmer. Oh, thou God of Quiet!
Whose reign is o'er seal'd eyelids and soft dreams,
Or deep, deep sleep, so as to be unfathom'd,
Look like thy brother, Death, — so still — so stirless —
For then we are happiest, as, it may be, we
Are happiest of all within the realm
Of thy stern, silent, and unwakening twin.
Again he moves — again the play of pain
Shoots o'er his features, as the sudden gust
Crisps the reluctant lake that lay so calm
Beneath the mountain shadow; or the blast
Ruffles the autumn leaves, that drooping cling
Faintly and motionless to their loved boughs.
I must awake him — yet not yet: who knows
From what I rouse him? It seems pain; but if
I quicken him to heavier pain? The fever
Of this tumultuous night, the grief too of
His wound, though slight, may cause all this, and shake
Me more to see than him to suffer. No:
Let Nature use her own maternal means, —
And I await to second, not disturb her.
Sar. (*awakening*). Not so — although ye multiplied the stars,
And gave them to me as a realm to share
From you and with you! I would not so purchase
The empire of eternity. Hence — hence —
Old hunter of the earliest brutes! and ye,
Who hunted fellow-creatures as if brutes!
Once bloody mortals — and now bloodier idols,
If your priests lie not! And thou, ghastly beldame!
Dripping with dusky gore, and trampling on
The carcasses of Inde — away! away!
Where am I? Where the spectres? Where — No — that

Is no false phantom: I should know it 'midst
All that the dead dare gloomily raise up
From their black gulf to daunt the living — Myrrha!
Myr. Alas! thou art pale, and on thy brow the drops
Gather like night dew. My belovèd, hush —
Calm thee. Thy speech seems of another world,
And thou art lord of this. Be of good cheer;
All will go well.
Sar. Thy *hand* — so — 't is thy hand;
'T is flesh; grasp — clasp — yet closer, till I feel
Myself that which I was.
Myr. At least know me
For what I am, and ever must be — thine.
Sar. I know it now. I know this life again.
Ah, Myrrha! I have been where we shall be.
Myr. My Lord!
Sar. I 've been i' the grave — where worms are lords,
And kings are — But I did not deem it so;
I thought 't was nothing.
Myr. So it is; except
Unto the timid who anticipate
That which may never be.
Sar. Oh, Myrrha! if
Sleep shows such things, what may not death disclose?
Myr. I know no evil death can show, which life
Has not already shown to those who live
Embodied longest. If there be indeed
A shore where mind survives, 't will be as mind,
All unincorporate: or if there flits
A shadow of this cumbrous clog of clay,
Which stalks, methinks, between our souls and heaven,
And fetters us to earth — at least the phantom,
Whate'er it have to fear, will not fear death.
Sar. I fear it not; but I have felt — have seen —
A legion of the dead.
Myr. And so have I.
The dust we tread upon was once alive,
And wretched. But proceed: what hast thou seen?
Speak it, 't will lighten thy dimm'd mind.
Sar. Methought —
Myr. Yet pause, thou art tired — in pain — exhausted; all
Which can impair both strength and spirit: seek
Rather to sleep again.
Sar. Not now — I would not
Dream; though I know it now to be a dream
What I have dreamt: — and canst thou bear to hear it?
Myr. I can bear all things, dreams of life or death,
Which I participate with you in semblance
Or full reality.
Sar. And this look'd real,
I tell you: after that these eyes were open,
I saw them in their flight — for then they fled.
Myr. Say on.
Sar. I saw, that is, I dream'd myself
Here — here — even where we are, guests as we were,
Myself a host that deem'd himself but guest,
Willing to equal all in social freedom;
But, on my right hand and my left, instead
Of thee and Zames, and our custom'd meeting,
Was ranged on my left hand a haughty, dark,
And deadly face — I could not recognise it,
Yet I had seen it, though I knew not where.
The features were a giant's, and the eye
Was still, yet lighted; his long locks curl'd down
On his vast bust, whence a huge quiver rose
With shaft-heads feather'd from the eagle's wing,
That peep'd up bristling through his serpent hair.
I invited him to fill the cup which stood
Between us, but he answer'd not — I fill'd it —
He took it not, but stared upon me, till
I trembled at the fix'd glare of his eye:
I frown'd upon him as a king should frown;
He frown'd not in his turn, but look'd upon me
With the same aspect, which appall'd me more
Because it changed not; and I turn'd for refuge

To milder guests, and sought them on the right,
Where thou wert wont to be. But — [*He pauses.*
Myr. What instead?
Sar. In thy own chair — thy own place in the banquet —
I sought thy sweet face in the circle, but
Instead — a grey-hair'd, wither'd, bloody-eyed,
And bloody-handed, ghastly, ghostly thing,
Female in garb, and crown'd upon the brow,
Furrow'd with years, yet sneering with the passion
Of vengeance, leering too with that of lust,
Sate: — my veins curdled.
Myr. Is this all?
Sar. Upon
Her right hand — her lank, bird-like right hand — stood
A goblet, bubbling o'er with blood; and on
Her left, another, fill'd with — what I saw not,
But turn'd from it and her. But all along
The table sate a range of crownèd wretches,
Of various aspects, but of one expression.
Myr. And felt you not this a mere vision?
Sar. No:
It was so palpable, I could have touch'd them.
I turn'd from one face to another, in
The hope to find at last one which I knew
Ere I saw theirs: but no — all turn'd upon me,
And stared, but neither ate nor drank, but stared
Till I grew stone, as they seem'd half to be,
Yet breathing stone, for I felt life in them,
And life in me: there was a horrid kind
Of sympathy between us, as if they
Had lost a part of death to come to me,
And I the half of life to sit by them.
We were in an existence all apart
From heaven or earth — And rather let me see
Death all than such a being!
Myr. And the end?
Sar. At last I sate, marble as they, when rose
The hunter and the crone; and smiling on me —
Yes, the enlarged but noble aspect of
The hunter smiled upon me — I should say,
His lips, for his eyes moved not — and the woman's
Thin lips relax'd to something like a smile.
Both rose, and the crown'd figures on each hand
Rose also, as if aping their chief shades —
Mere mimics even in death — but I sate still:
A desperate courage crept through every limb,
And at the last I fear'd them not, but laugh'd
Full in their phantom faces. But then — then
The hunter laid his hand on mine: I took it,
And grasp'd it — but it melted from my own;
While he too vanish'd, and left nothing but
The memory of a hero, for he look'd so.
Myr. And was: the ancestor of heroes, too,
And thine no less.
Sar. Ay, Myrrha, but the woman,
The female who remain'd, she flew upon me,
And burnt my lips up with her noisome kisses;
And, flinging down the goblets on each hand,
Methought their poisons flow'd around us, till
Each form'd a hideous river. Still she clung;
The other phantoms, like a row of statues,
Stood dull as in our temples, but she still
Embraced me, while I shrunk from her, as if,
In lieu of her remote descendant, I
Had been the son who slew her for her incest.
Then — then — a chaos of all loathsome things
Throng'd thick and shapeless: I was dead, yet feeling —
Buried, and raised again — consumed by worms,
Purged by the flames, and wither'd in the air!
I can fix nothing further of my thoughts,
Save that I long'd for thee, and sought for thee,
In all these agonies, — and woke and found thee.
Myr. So shalt thou find me ever at thy side,
Here and hereafter, if the last may be.
But think not of these things — the mere creations

Of late events, acting upon a frame
Unused to toil, yet over-wrought by toil
Such as might try the sternest.
Sar. I am better.
Now that I see *thee once* more, *what was seen*
Seems nothing.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. Is the king so soon awake?
Sar. Yes, brother, and I would I had not slept;
For all the predecessors of our line
Rose up, methought, to drag me down to them.
My father was amongst them, too; but he,
I know not why, kept from me, leaving me
Between the hunter-founder of our race,
And her, the homicide and husband-killer,
Whom you call glorious.
Sal. So I term you also,
Now you have shown a spirit like to hers.
By day-break I propose that we set forth,
And charge once more the rebel crew who still
Keep gathering head, repulsed, but not quite quell’d.
Sar. How wears the night?
Sal. There yet remain some hours
Of darkness: use them for your further rest.
Sar. No, not to-night, if ’t is not gone: methought
I pass’d hours in that vision.
Myr. Scarcely one;
I watch’d by you: it was a heavy hour,
But an hour only.
Sar. Let us then hold council:
To-morrow we set forth.
Sal. But ere that time,
I had a grace to seek.
Sar. ’T is granted.
Sal. Hear it
Ere you reply too readily; and ’t is
For *your* ear only.
Myr. Prince, I take my leave.
[*Exit* MYRRHA.
Sal. That slave deserves her freedom.
Sar. Freedom only!
That slave deserves to share a throne.
Sal. Your patience —
’T is not yet vacant, and ’t is of its partner
I come to speak with you.
Sar. How! of the queen?
Sal. Even so. I judged it fitting for their safety,
That, ere the dawn, she sets forth with her children
For Paphlagonia, where our kinsman Cotta
Governs; and there at all events secure
My nephews and your sons their lives, and with them
Their just pretensions to the crown in case —
Sar. I perish — as is probable: well thought —
Let them set forth with a sure escort.
Sal. That
Is all provided, and the galley ready
To drop down the Euphrates; but ere they
Depart, will you not see —
Sar. My sons? It may
Unman my heart, and the poor boys will weep:
And what can I reply to comfort them,
Save with some hollow hopes, and ill-worn smiles?
You know I cannot feign.
Sal. But you can feel!
At least, I trust so: in a word, the queen
Requests to see you ere you part — for ever.
Sar. Unto what end? what purpose? I will grant
Aught — all that she can ask — but such a meeting.
Sal. You know, or ought to know, enough of women,
Since you have studied them so steadily,
That what they ask in aught that touches on
The heart, is dearer to their feelings or
Their fancy, than the whole external world.
I think as you do of my sister’s wish;
But ’t was her wish; she is my sister, you
Her husband — will you grant it?
Sar. ’T will be useless:
But let her come.
Sal. I go. [*Exit* SALEMENES.
Sar. We have lived asunder
Too long to meet again — and *now* to meet!
Have I not cares enow, and pangs enow,
To bear alone, that we must mingle sorrows,
Who have ceased to mingle love?

Re-enter SALEMENES *and* ZARINA.

Sal. My sister! Courage:
Shame not our blood with trembling, but remember
From whence we sprung. — The queen is present, sire.

Zar. I pray thee, brother, leave me.
Sal. Since you ask it.
[*Exit* SALEMENES.
Zar. Alone with him! How many a year has pass'd,
Though we are still so young, since we have met,
Which I have worn in widowhood of heart.
He loved me not: yet he seems little changed,
Changed to me only — would the change were mutual!
He speaks not — scarce regards me — not a word,
Nor look — yet he *was* soft of voice and aspect,
Indifferent, not austere. — My lord!
Sar. Zarina!
Zar. No, *not* Zarina — do not say Zarina.
That tone, that word, annihilate long years,
And things which make them longer.
Sar. 'T is too late
To think of these past dreams. Let 's not reproach —
That is, reproach me not — for the *last* time —
Zar. And *first*. I ne'er reproach'd you.
Sar. 'T is most true;
And that reproof comes heavier on my heart
Than — But our hearts are not in our own power.
Zar. Nor hands; but I gave both.
Sar. Your brother said
It was your will to see me, ere you went
From Nineveh with — (*He hesitates.*)
Zar. Our children: it is true.
I wish'd to thank you that you have not divided
My heart from all that 's left it now to love —
Those who are yours and mine, who look like you,
And look upon me as you look'd upon me
Once — But they have not changed.
Sar. Nor ever will.
I fain would have them dutiful.
Zar. I cherish
Those infants, not alone from the blind love
Of a fond mother, but as a fond woman.
They are now the only tie between us.
Sar. Deem not
I have not done you justice: rather make them
Resemble your own line than their own sire.
I trust them with you — to you: fit them for
A throne, or, if that be denied — You have heard
Of this night's tumults?
Zar. I had half forgotten,
And could have welcomed any grief save yours,
Which gave me to behold your face again.
Sar. The throne — I say it not in fear — but 't is
In peril; they perhaps may never mount it:
But let them not for this lose sight of it.
I will dare all things to bequeath it them;
But if I fail, then they must win it back
Bravely — and, won, wear it wisely, not as I
Have wasted down my royalty.
Zar. They ne'er
Shall know from me of aught but what may honour
Their father's memory.
Sar. Rather let them hear
The truth from you than from a trampling world.
If they be in adversity, they 'll learn
Too soon the scorn of crowds for crownless princes,
And find that all their father's sins are theirs.
My boys — I could have borne it were I childless.
Zar. Oh! do not say so — do not poison all
My peace left, by unwishing that thou wert
A father. If thou conquerest, they shall reign,
And honour him who saved the realm for them,
So little cared for as his own; and if —
Sar. 'T is lost, all earth will cry out, thank your father!
And they will swell the echo with a curse.
Zar. That they shall never do; but rather honour
The name of him, who, dying like a king,
In his last hours did more for his own memory
Than many monarchs in a length of days,
Which date the flight of time, but make no annals.
Sar. Our annals draw perchance unto their close;

But at the least, whate'er the past, their end
Shall be like their beginning — memorable.
Zar. Yet, be not rash — be careful of your life,
Live but for those who love.
Sar. And who are they?
A slave, who loves from passion — I'll not say
Ambition — she has seen thrones shake, and loves;
A few friends who have revell'd till we are
As one, for they are nothing if I fall;
A brother I have injured — children whom
I have neglected, and a spouse —
Zar. Who loves.
Sar. And pardons?
Zar. I have never thought of this,
And cannot pardon till I have condemn'd.
Sar. My wife!
Zar. Now blessings on thee for that word!
I never thought to hear it more — from thee.
Sar. Oh! thou wilt hear it from my subjects. Yes —
These slaves, whom I have nurtured, pamper'd, fed,
And swoln with peace, and gorged with plenty, till
They reign themselves — all monarchs in their mansions —
Now swarm forth in rebellion, and demand
His death who made their lives a jubilee;
While the few upon whom I have no claim
Are faithful! This is true, yet monstrous.
Zar. 'T is
Perhaps too natural; for benefits
Turn poison in bad minds.
Sar. And good ones make
Good out of evil. Happier than the bee,
Which hives not but from wholesome flowers.
Zar. Then reap
The honey, nor enquire whence 't is derived.
Be satisfied — you are not all abandon'd.
Sar. My life insures me that. How long, bethink you,
Were not I yet a king, should I be mortal;
That is, where mortals *are*, not where they must be?
Zar. I know not. But yet live for my — that is,
Your children's sake!
Sar. My gentle, wrong'd Zarina!
I am the very slave of circumstance
And impulse — borne away with every breath!
Misplaced upon the throne, misplaced in life.
I know not what I could have been, but feel
I am not what I should be — let it end.
But take this with thee: if I was not form'd
To prize a love like thine, a mind like thine,
Nor dote even on thy beauty — as I've doted
On lesser charms, for no cause save that such
Devotion was a duty, and I hated
All that look'd like a chain for me or others
(This even rebellion must avouch); yet hear
These words, perhaps among my last — that none
E'er valued more thy virtues, though he knew not
To profit by them — as the miner lights
Upon a vein of virgin ore, discovering
That which avails him nothing: he hath found it,
But 't is not his — but some superior's, who
Placed him to dig, but not divide the wealth
Which sparkles at his feet; nor dare he lift
Nor poise it, but must grovel on, upturning
The sullen earth.
Zar. Oh! if thou hast at length
Discover'd that my love is worth esteem,
I ask no more — but let us hence together,
And *I* — let me say *we* — shall yet be happy.
Assyria is not all the earth; we'll find
A world out of our own, and be more bless'd
Than I have ever been, or thou, with all
An empire to indulge thee.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. I must part ye;
The moments, which must not be lost, are passing.
Zar. Inhuman brother! wilt thou thus weigh out
Instants so high and blest?
Sal. Blest!
Zar. He hath been
So gentle with me, that I cannot think
Of quitting.
Sal. So — this feminine farewell
Ends as such partings end, in *no* departure.

I thought as much, and yielded against all
My better bodings. But it must not be.
Zar. Not be?
Sal. Remain, and perish —
Zar. With my husband —
Sal. And children.
Zar. Alas!
Sal. Hear me, sister, like
My sister: — all 's prepared to make your safety
Certain, and of the boys too, our last hopes;
'T is not a single question of mere feeling,
Though that were much — but 't is a point of state:
The rebels would do more to seize upon
The offspring of their sovereign, and so crush —
Zar. Ah! do not name it.
Sal. Well, then, mark me: when
They are safe beyond the Median's grasp, the rebels
Have miss'd their chief aim — the extinction of
The line of Nimrod. Though the present king
Fall, his sons live for victory and vengeance.
Zar. But could not I remain, alone?
Sal. What! leave
Your children, with two parents and yet orphans —
In a strange land — so young, so distant?
Zar. No —
My heart will break.
Sal. Now you know all — decide.
Sar. Zarina, he hath spoken well, and we
Must yield awhile to this necessity.
Remaining here, you may lose all; departing,
You save the better part of what is left,
To both of us, and to such loyal hearts
As yet beat in these kingdoms.
Sal. The time presses.
Sar. Go, then. If e'er we meet again, perhaps
I may be worthier of you — and, if not,
Remember that my faults, though not atoned for,
Are *ended.* Yet, I dread thy nature will
Grieve more above the blighted name and ashes
Which once were mightiest in Assyria — than —
But I grow womanish again, and must not;
I must learn sternness now. My sins have all
Been of the softer order — *hide* thy tears —
I do not bid thee *not* to shed them — 't were
Easier to stop Euphrates at its source
Than one tear of a true and tender heart;
But let me not behold them; they unman me
Here when I had remann'd myself. My brother,
Lead her away.
Zar. Oh, God! I never shall
Behold him more!
Sal. (*striving to conduct her*). Nay, sister, I *must* be obey'd.
Zar. I must remain — away! you shall not hold me.
What, shall he die alone? — *I* live alone?
Sal. He shall *not die alone;* but lonely you
Have lived for years.
Zar. That 's false! I knew *he* lived,
And lived upon his image — let me go!
Sal. (*conducting her off the stage*). Nay, then, I must use some fraternal force,
Which you will pardon.
Zar. Never. Help me! Oh!
Sardanapalus, wilt thou thus behold me
Torn from thee?
Sal. Nay — then all is lost again,
If that this moment is not gain'd.
Zar. My brain turns —
My eyes fail — where is he? [*She faints.*
Sar. (*advancing*). No — set her down —
She 's dead — and you have slain her.
Sal. 'T is the mere
Faintness of o'erwrought passion: in the air
She will recover. Pray, keep back. — [*Aside.*] I must
Avail myself of this sole moment to
Bear her to where her children are embark'd,
I' the royal galley on the river.
[SALEMENES *bears her off.*
Sar. (*solus*). This, too —
And this too must I suffer — I, who never
Inflicted purposely on human hearts
A voluntary pang! But that is false —
She loved me, and I loved her. — Fatal passion!
Why dost thou not expire *at once* in hearts
Which thou hast lighted up at once? Zarina!
I must pay dearly for the desolation
Now brought upon thee. Had I never loved

But thee, I should have been an unopposed
Monarch of honouring nations. To what gulfs
A single deviation from the track
Of human duties leads even those who claim
The homage of mankind as their born due,
And find it, till they forfeit it themselves!

Enter MYRRHA.

Sar. *You* here! Who call'd you?
Myr. No one — but I heard
Far off a voice of wail and lamentation,
And thought —
Sar. It forms no portion of your duties
To enter here till sought for.
Myr. Though I might,
Perhaps, recall some softer words of yours
(Although they *too were chiding*), which reproved me
Because I ever dreaded to intrude;
Resisting my own wish and your injunction
To heed no time nor presence, but approach you
Uncall'd for: — I retire.
Sar. Yet stay — being here.
I pray you pardon me: events have sour'd me
Till I wax peevish — heed it not: I shall
Soon be myself again.
Myr. I wait with patience,
What I shall see with pleasure.
Sar. Scarce a moment
Before your entrance in this hall, Zarina,
Queen of Assyria, departed hence.
Myr. Ah!
Sar. Wherefore do you start?
Myr. Did I do so?
Sar. 'T was well you enter'd by another portal,
Else you had met. That pang at least is spared her!
Myr. I know to feel for her.
Sar. That is too much,
And beyond nature — 't is nor mutual
Nor possible. You cannot pity her,
Nor she aught but —
Myr. Despise the favourite slave?
Not more than I have ever scorn'd myself.
Sar. Scorn'd! what, to be the envy of your sex,
And lord it o'er the heart of the world's lord?
Myr. Were you the lord of twice ten thousand worlds
(As you are like to lose the one you sway'd),
I did abase myself as much in being
Your paramour, as though you were a peasant —
Nay, more, if that the peasant were a Greek.
Sar. You talk it well —
Myr. And truly.
Sar. In the hour
Of man's adversity all things grow daring
Against the falling; but as I am not
Quite fall'n, nor now disposed to bear reproaches,
Perhaps because I merit them too often,
Let us then part while peace is still between us.
Myr. Part!
Sar. Have not all past human beings parted,
And must not all the present one day part?
Myr. Why?
Sar. For your safety, which I will have look'd to,
With a strong escort to your native land;
And such gifts, as, if you had not been all
A queen, shall make your dowry worth a kingdom.
Myr. I pray you talk not thus.
Sar. The queen is gone:
You need not shame to follow. I would fall
Alone — I seek no partners but in pleasure.
Myr. And I no pleasure but in parting not.
You shall not force me from you.
Sar. Think well of it —
It soon may be too late.
Myr. So let it be;
For then you cannot separate me from you.
Sar. And will not; but I thought you wish'd it.
Myr. I!
Sar. You spoke of your abasement.
Myr. And I feel it
Deeply — more deeply than all things but love.
Sar. Then fly from it.
Myr. 'T will not recall the past —
'T will not restore my honour, nor my heart.
No — here I stand or fall. If that you conquer,
I live to joy in your great triumph: should

Your lot be different, I 'll not weep, but share it.
You did not doubt me a few hours ago.
Sar. Your courage never — nor your love till now;
And none could make me doubt it save yourself.
Those words —
Myr. Were words. I pray you, let the proofs
Be in the past acts you were pleased to praise
This very night, and in my further bearing
Beside, wherever you are borne by fate.
Sar. I am content: and, trusting in my cause,
Think we may yet be victors and return
To peace — the only victory I covet.
To me war is no glory — conquest no
Renown. To be forced thus to uphold my right
Sits heavier on my heart than all the wrongs
These men would bow me down with. Never, never,
Can I forget this night, even should I live
To add it to the memory of others.
I thought to have made mine inoffensive rule
An era of sweet peace 'midst bloody annals,
A green spot amidst desert centuries,
On which the future would turn back and smile,
And cultivate, or sigh when it could not
Recall Sardanapalus' golden reign.
I thought to have made my realm a paradise,
And every moon an epoch of new pleasures.
I took the rabble's shouts for love, the breath
Of friends for truth, the lips of woman for
My only guerdon — so they are, my Myrrha: [*He kisses her.*
Kiss me. Now let them take my realm and life!
They shall have both, but never thee!
Myr. No, never!
Man may despoil his brother man of all
That 's great or glittering — kingdoms fall — hosts yield —
Friends fail — slaves fly — and all betray — and, more
Than all, the most indebted — but a heart
That loves without self-love! 'T is here — now prove it.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. I sought you — How! *she* here again?
Sar. Return not
Now to reproof: methinks your aspect speaks
Of higher matter than a woman's presence.
Sal. The only woman whom it much imports me
At such a moment now is safe in absence —
The queen 's embark'd.
Sar. And well? say that much.
Sal. Yes.
Her transient weakness has pass'd o'er; at least,
It settled into tearless silence: her
Pale face and glittering eye, after a glance
Upon her sleeping children, were still fix'd
Upon the palace towers as the swift galley
Stole down the hurrying stream beneath the starlight;
But she said nothing.
Sar. Would I felt no more
Than she has said!
Sal. 'T is now too late to feel!
Your feelings cannot cancel a sole pang:
To change them, my advices bring sure tidings
That the rebellious Medes and Chaldees, marshall'd
By their two leaders, are already up
In arms again; and, serrying their ranks,
Prepare to attack: they have apparently
Been join'd by other satraps.
Sar. What! more rebels?
Let us be first, then.
Sal. That were hardly prudent
Now, though it was our first intention. If
By noon to-morrow we are join'd by those
I 've sent for by sure messengers, we shall be
In strength enough to venture an attack,
Ay, and pursuit too; but till then, my voice
Is to await the onset.
Sar. I detest
That waiting; though it seems so safe to fight
Behind high walls, and hurl down foes into
Deep fosses, or behold them sprawl on spikes

Strew'd to receive them, still I like it not —
My soul seems lukewarm; but when I set on them,
Though they were piled on mountains, I would have
A pluck at them, or perish in hot blood! —
Let me then charge!
Sal. You talk like a young soldier.
Sar. I am no soldier, but a man: speak not
Of soldiership, I loathe the word, and those
Who pride themselves upon it; but direct me
Where I may pour upon them.
Sal. You must spare
To expose your life too hastily; 't is not
Like mine or any other subject's breath:
The whole war turns upon it — with it; this
Alone creates it, kindles, and may quench it —
Prolong it — end it.
Sar. Then let us end both!
It were better thus, perhaps, than prolong either;
I'm sick of one, perchance of both.
[*A trumpet sounds without.*
Sal. Hark!
Sar. Let us
Reply, not listen.
Sal. And your wound!
Sar. 'T is bound —
It is heal'd — I had forgotten it. Away!
A leech's lancet would have scratch'd me deeper;
The slave that gave it might be well ashamed
To have struck so weakly.
Sal. Now, may none this hour
Strike with a better aim!
Sar. Ay, if we conquer;
But if not, they will only leave to me
A task they might have spared their king.
Upon them! [*Trumpet sounds again.*
Sal. I am with you.
Sar. Ho, my arms! again, my arms!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V

SCENE I

The same Hall in the Palace.

MYRRHA *and* BALEA.

Myr. (*at a window*). The day at last has broken. What a night
Hath usher'd it! How beautiful in heaven!
Though varied with a transitory storm,
More beautiful in that variety.
How hideous upon earth! where peace and hope,
And love and revel, in an hour were trampled
By human passions to a human chaos,
Not yet resolved to separate elements —
'T is warring still! And can the sun so rise,
So bright, so rolling back the clouds into
Vapours more lovely than the unclouded sky,
With golden pinnacles, and snowy mountains,
And billows purpler than the ocean's, making
In heaven a glorious mockery of the earth,
So like we almost deem it permanent;
So fleeting, we can scarcely call it aught
Beyond a vision, 't is so transiently
Scatter'd along the eternal vault: and yet
It dwells upon the soul, and soothes the soul,
And blends itself into the soul, until
Sunrise and sunset form the haunted epoch
Of sorrow and of love; which they who mark not,
Know not the realms where those twin genii
(Who chasten and who purify our hearts,
So that we would not change their sweet rebukes
For all the boisterous joys that ever shook
The air with clamour) build the palaces
Where their fond votaries repose and breathe
Briefly; but in that brief cool calm inhale
Enough of heaven to enable them to bear
The rest of common, heavy, human hours,
And dream them through in placid sufferance;
Though seemingly employ'd like all the rest
Of toiling breathers in allotted tasks
Of pain or pleasure, *two* names for *one* feeling,
Which our internal, restless agony
Would vary in the sound, although the sense
Escapes our highest efforts to be happy.
Bal. You muse right calmly: and can you so watch
The sunrise which may be our last?
Myr. It is

Therefore that I so watch it, and reproach
Those eyes, which never may behold it more,
For having look'd upon it oft, too oft,
Without the reverence and the rapture due
To that which keeps all earth from being as fragile
As I am in this form. Come, look upon it,
The Chaldee's god, which, when I gaze upon,
I grow almost a convert to your Baal.
Bal. As now he reigns in heaven, so once on earth
He sway'd.
Myr. He sways it now far more, then; never
Had earthly monarch half the power and glory
Which centres in a single ray of his.
Bal. Surely he is a god!
Myr. So we Greeks deem too;
And yet I sometimes think that gorgeous orb
Must rather be the abode of gods than one
Of the immortal sovereigns. Now he breaks
Through all the clouds, and fills my eyes with light
That shuts the world out. I can look no more.
Bal. Hark! heard you not a sound?
Myr. No, 't was mere fancy;
They battle it beyond the wall, and not
As in late midnight conflict in the very
Chambers: the palace has become a fortress
Since that insidious hour; and here, within
The very centre, girded by vast courts
And regal halls of pyramid proportions,
Which must be carried one by one before
They penetrate to where they then arrived,
We are as much shut in even from the sound
Of peril as from glory.
Bal. But they reach'd
Thus far before.
Myr. Yes, by surprise, and were
Beat back by valour: now at once we have
Courage and vigilance to guard us.
Bal. May they
Prosper!
Myr. That is the prayer of many, and
The dread of more: it is an anxious hour;
I strive to keep it from my thoughts. Alas,
How vainly!
Bal. It is said the king's demeanour
In the late action scarcely more appall'd
The rebels than astonish'd his true subjects.
Myr. 'T is easy to astonish or appal
The vulgar mass which moulds a horde of slaves;
But he did bravely.
Bal. Slew he not Beleses?
I heard the soldiers say he struck him down.
Myr. The wretch was overthrown, but rescued to
Triumph, perhaps, o'er one who vanquish'd him
In fight, as he had spared him in his peril;
And by that heedless pity risk'd a crown.
Bal. Hark!
Myr. You are right; some steps approach, but slowly.

Enter Soldiers, bearing in SALEMENES *wounded, with a broken Javelin in his Side: they seat him upon one of the Couches which furnish the Apartment.*

Myr. Oh, Jove!
Bal. Then all is over.
Sal. That is false.
Hew down the slave who says so, if a soldier.
Myr. Spare him — he 's none: a mere court butterfly,
That flutters in the pageant of a monarch.
Sal. Let him live on, then.
Myr. So wilt thou, I trust.
Sal. I fain would live this hour out, and the event,
But doubt it. Wherefore did ye bear me here?
Sol. By the king's order. When the javelin struck you,
You fell and fainted: 't was his strict command
To bear you to this hall.
Sal. 'T was not ill done:
For seeming slain in that cold dizzy trance,
The sight might shake our soldiers — but — 't is vain,
I feel it ebbing!
Myr. Let me see the wound;
I am not quite skilless: in my native land
'T is part of our instruction. War being constant,
We are nerved to look on such things.
Sol. Best extract
The javelin.
Myr. Hold! no, no, it cannot be.
Sal. I am sped, then!

Myr. With the blood that fast must follow
The extracted weapon, I do fear thy life.
Sal. And I *not* death. Where was the king when you
Convey'd me from the spot where I was stricken?
Sol. Upon the same ground, and encouraging
With voice and gesture the dispirited troops
Who had seen you fall, and falter'd back.
Sal. Whom heard ye
Named next to the command?
Sol. I did not hear.
Sal. Fly, then, and tell him, 't was my last request
That Zames take my post until the junction,
So hoped for, yet delay'd, of Ofratanes,
Satrap of Susa. Leave me here: our troops
Are not so numerous as to spare your absence.
Sol. But prince —
Sal. Hence, I say! Here 's a courtier and
A woman, the best chamber company.
As you would not permit me to expire
Upon the field, I 'll have no idle soldiers
About my sick couch. Hence! and do my bidding! [*Exeunt the Soldiers.*
Myr. Gallant and glorious spirit! must the earth
So soon resign thee?
Sal. Gentle Myrrha, 't is
The end I would have chosen, had I saved
The monarch or the monarchy by this;
As 't is, I have not outlived them.
Myr. You wax paler.
Sal. Your hand; this broken weapon but prolongs
My pangs, without sustaining life enough
To make me useful: I would draw it forth,
And my life with it, could I but hear how
The fight goes.

Enter SARDANAPALUS *and Soldiers.*

Sar. My best brother!
Sal. And the battle
Is lost?
Sar. (*despondingly*). You see *me here.*
Sal. I 'd rather see you *thus!*
[*He draws out the weapon from the wound, and dies.*
Sar. And *thus* I will be seen; unless the succour,
The last frail reed of our beleaguer'd hopes,
Arrive with Ofratanes.
Myr. Did you not
Receive a token from your dying brother,
Appointing Zames chief?
Sar. I did.
Myr. Where 's Zames?
Sar. Dead.
Myr. And Altada?
Sar. Dying.
Myr. Pania? Sfero?
Sar. Pania yet lives; but Sfero 's fled, or captive.
I am alone.
Myr. And is all lost?
Sar. Our walls,
Though thinly mann'd, may still hold out against
Their present force, or aught save treachery:
But i' the field —
Myr. I thought 't was the intent
Of Salemenes not to risk a sally
Till ye were strengthen'd by the expected succours.
Sar. *I* over-ruled him.
Myr. Well, the fault 's a brave one.
Sar. But fatal. Oh, my brother! I would give
These realms, of which thou wert the ornament,
The sword and shield, the sole-redeeming honour,
To call back — But I will not weep for thee;
Thou shalt be mourn'd for as thou wouldst be mourn'd.
It grieves me most that thou couldst quit this life
Believing that I could survive what thou
Hast died for — our long royalty of race.
If I redeem it, I will give thee blood
Of thousands, tears of millions, for atonement
(The tears of all the good are thine already).
If not, we meet again soon, — if the spirit
Within us lives beyond: — thou readest mine,
And dost me justice now. Let me once clasp
That yet warm hand, and fold that throbless heart [*Embraces the body.*
To this which beats so bitterly. Now, bear
The body hence.
Soldier. Where?
Sar. To my proper chamber.
Place it beneath my canopy, as though

The king lay there: when this is done, we will
Speak further of the rites due to such ashes.
[*Exeunt Soldiers with the body of* SALEMENES.

Enter PANIA.

Sar. Well, Pania! have you placed the guards, and issued
The orders fix'd on?
Pan. Sire, I have obey'd.
Sar. And do the soldiers keep their hearts up?
Pan. Sire?
Sar. I'm answer'd! When a king asks twice, and has
A question as an answer to *his* question,
It is a portent. What! they are dishearten'd?
Pan. The death of Salemenes, and the shouts
Of the exulting rebels on his fall,
Have made them —
Sar. *Rage* — not droop — it should have been.
We'll find the means to rouse them.
Pan. Such a loss
Might sadden even a victory.
Sar. Alas!
Who can so feel it as I feel? but yet,
Though coop'd within these walls, they are strong, and we
Have those without will break their way through hosts,
To make their sovereign's dwelling what it was —
A palace, not a prison nor a fortress.

Enter an Officer hastily.

Sar. Thy face seems ominous. Speak!
Offi. I dare not.
Sar. Dare not?
While millions dare revolt with sword in hand!
That's strange. I pray thee break that loyal silence
Which loathes to shock its sovereign; we can hear
Worse than thou hast to tell.
Pan. Proceed, thou hearest.
Offi. The wall which skirted near the river's brink
Is thrown down by the sudden inundation
Of the Euphrates, which now rolling, swoln
From the enormous mountains where it rises,
By the late rains of that tempestuous region,
O'erfloods its banks, and hath destroy'd the bulwark.
Pan. That's a black augury! it has been said
For ages, 'That the city ne'er should yield
To man, until the river grew its foe.'
Sar. I can forgive the omen, not the ravage.
How much is swept down of the wall?
Offi. About
Some twenty stadia.
Sar. And all this is left
Pervious to the assailants?
Offi. For the present
The river's fury must impede the assault;
But when he shrinks into his wonted channel,
And may be cross'd by the accustom'd barks,
The palace is their own.
Sar. That shall be never.
Though men, and gods, and elements, and omens,
Have risen up 'gainst one who ne'er provoked them,
My father's house shall never be a cave
For wolves to horde and howl in.
Pan. With your sanction
I will proceed to the spot, and take such measures
For the assurance of the vacant space
As time and means permit.
Sar. About it straight,
And bring me back, as speedily as full
And fair investigation may permit,
Report of the true state of this irruption
Of waters. [*Exeunt* PANIA *and the Officer.*
Myr. Thus the very waves rise up
Against you.
Sar. They are not my subjects, girl,
And may be pardon'd, since they can't be punish'd.
Myr. I joy to see this portent shakes you not.
Sar. I am past the fear of portents: they can tell me
Nothing I have not told myself since midnight:
Despair anticipates such things.
Myr. Despair!
Sar. No; not despair precisely. When we know
All that can come, and how to meet it, our
Resolves, if firm, may merit a more noble

Word than this is to give it utterance.
But what are words to us? we have well nigh done
With them and all things.
Myr. Save *one deed* — the last
And greatest to all mortals; crowning act
Of all that was, or is, or is to be —
The only thing common to all mankind,
So different in their births, tongues, sexes, natures,
Hues, features, climes, times, feelings, intellects,
Without one point of union save in this,
To which we tend, for which we 're born, and thread
The labyrinth of mystery call'd life.
Sar. Our clew being well nigh wound out, let 's be cheerful.
They who have nothing more to fear may well
Indulge a smile at that which once appall'd;
As children at discover'd bugbears.

Re-enter PANIA.

Pan. 'T is
As was reported; I have order'd there
A double guard, withdrawing from the wall
Where it was strongest the required addition
To watch the breach occasion'd by the waters.
Sar. You have done your duty faithfully, and as
My worthy Pania! Further ties between us
Draw near a close. I pray you take this key; [*Gives a key.*
It opens to a secret chamber, placed
Behind the couch in my own chamber. (Now
Press'd by a nobler weight than e'er it bore —
Though a long line of sovereigns have lain down
Along its golden frame — as bearing for
A time what late was Salemenes.) Search
The secret covert to which this will lead you;
'T is full of treasure: take it for yourself
And your companions; there 's enough to load ye
Though ye be many. Let the slaves be freed, too;
And all the inmates of the palace, of
Whatever sex, now quit it in an hour.
Thence launch the regal barks, once form'd for pleasure,
And now to serve for safety, and embark:
The river 's broad and swoln, and uncommanded
(More potent than a king) by these besiegers.
Fly! and be happy!
Pan. Under your protection!
So you accompany your faithful guard.
Sar. No, Pania! that must not be; get thee hence,
And leave me to my fate.
Pan. 'T is the first time
I ever disobey'd; but now —
Sar. So all men
Dare beard me now, and Insolence within
Apes Treason from without. Question no further;
'T is my command, my last command. Wilt *thou*
Oppose it? *thou!*
Pan. But yet — not yet.
Sar. Well, then,
Swear that you will obey when I shall give
The signal.
Pan. With a heavy but true heart,
I promise.
Sar. 'T is enough. Now order here
Fagots, pine-nuts, and wither'd leaves, and such
Things as catch fire and blaze with one sole spark;
Bring cedar, too, and precious drugs, and spices,
And mighty planks, to nourish a tall pile;
Bring frankincense and myrrh, too, for it is
For a great sacrifice I build the pyre!
And heap them round yon throne.
Pan. My lord!
Sar. I have said it,
And *you* have *sworn.*
Pan. And could keep my faith
Without a vow. [*Exit* PANIA.
Myr. What mean you?
Sar. You shall know
Anon — what the whole earth shall ne'er forget.

PANIA, *returning with a Herald.*

Pan. My king, in going forth upon my duty,
This herald has been brought before me, craving
An audience.
Sar Let him speak.

Her. The *King* Arbaces —
Sar. What, crown'd already? — But, proceed.
Her. Beleses,
The anointed high-priest —
Sar. Of what god or demon?
With new kings rise new altars. But, proceed;
You are sent to prate your master's will, and not
Reply to mine.
Her. And Satrap Ofratanes —
Sar. Why, *he* is *ours.*
Her. (*showing a ring*). Be sure that he is now
In the camp of the conquerors; behold
His signet ring.
Sar. 'T is his. A worthy triad!
Poor Salemenes! thou hast died in time
To see one treachery the less: this man
Was thy true friend and my most trusted subject.
Proceed.
Her. They offer thee thy life, and freedom
Of choice to single out a residence
In any of the further provinces,
Guarded and watch'd, but not confined in person,
Where thou shalt pass thy days in peace; but on
Condition that the three young princes are
Given up as hostages.
Sar. (*ironically*). The generous victors!
Her. I wait the answer.
Sar. Answer, slave! How long
Have slaves decided on the doom of kings?
Her. Since they were free.
Sar. Mouthpiece of mutiny!
Thou at the least shalt learn the penalty
Of treason, though its proxy only. Pania!
Let his head be thrown from our walls within
The rebels' lines, his carcass down the river.
Away with him!
[Pania *and the Guards seizing him*
Pan. I never yet obey'd
Your orders with more pleasure than the present.
Hence with him, soldiers! do not soil this hall
Of royalty with treasonable gore;
Put him to rest without.
Her. A single word:
My office, king, is sacred.
Sar. And what 's *mine?*
That thou shouldst come and dare to ask of me
To lay it down?
Her. I but obey'd my orders,
At the same peril, if refused, as now
Incurr'd by my obedience.
Sar. So there are
New monarchs of an hour's growth as despotic
As sovereigns swathed in purple, and enthroned
From birth to manhood!
Her. My life waits your breath.
Yours (I speak humbly) — but it may be — yours
May also be in danger scarce less imminent:
Would it then suit the last hours of a line
Such as is that of Nimrod, to destroy
A peaceful herald, unarm'd, in his office;
And violate not only all that man
Holds sacred between man and man, but that
More holy tie which links us with the gods?
Sar. He 's right. — Let him go free. — My life's last act
Shall not be one of wrath. Here, fellow, take
[*Gives him a golden cup from a table near.*
This golden goblet, let it hold your wine,
And think of *me;* or melt it into ingots,
And think of nothing but their weight and value.
Her. I thank you doubly for my life, and this
Most gorgeous gift which renders it more precious.
But must I bear no answer?
Sar. Yes, — I ask
An hour's truce to consider.
Her. But an hour's?
Sar. An hour's: if at the expiration of
That time your masters hear no further from me,
They are to deem that I reject their terms,
And act befittingly.
Her. I shall not fail
To be a faithful legate of your pleasure.
Sar. And hark! a word more.
Her. I shall not forget it,
Whate'er it be.
Sar. Commend me to Beleses;

And tell him, ere a year expire, I summon
Him hence to meet me.
Her. Where?
Sar. At Babylon.
At least from thence he will depart to meet me.
Her. I shall obey you to the letter.
[*Exit Herald.*
Sar. Pania!—
Now, my good Pania!—quick! with what I order'd.
Pan. My lord,—the soldiers are already charged.
And see! they enter.

Soldiers enter, and form a Pile about the Throne, etc.

Sar. Higher, my good soldiers,
And thicker yet; and see that the foundation
Be such as will not speedily exhaust
Its own too subtle flame; nor yet be quench'd
With aught officious aid would bring to quell it.
Let the throne form the *core* of it; I would not
Leave that, save fraught with fire unquenchable,
To the new comers. Frame the whole as if
'T were to enkindle the strong tower of our
Inveterate enemies. Now it bears an aspect!
How say you, Pania, will this pile suffice
For a king's obsequies?
Pan. Ay, for a kingdom's.
I understand you, now.
Sar. And blame me?
Pan. No—
Let me but fire the pile, and share it with you.
Myr. That duty 's mine.
Pan. A woman's!
Myr. 'T is the soldier's
Part to die *for* his sovereign, and why not
The woman's with her lover?
Pan. 'T is most strange!
Myr. But not so rare, my Pania, as thou think'st it,
In the meantime, live thou.—Farewell! the pile
Is ready.
Pan. I should shame to leave my sovereign
With but a single female to partake
His death.
Sar. Too many far have heralded
Me to the dust already. Get thee hence;
Enrich thee.
Pan. And live wretched!
Sar. Think upon
Thy vow:—'t is sacred and irrevocable.
Pan. Since it is so, farewell.
Sar. Search well my chamber,
Feel no remorse at bearing off the gold;
Remember, what you leave you leave the slaves
Who slew me: and when you have borne away
All safe off to your boats, blow one long blast
Upon the trumpet as you quit the palace.
The river's brink is too remote, its stream
Too loud at present to permit the echo
To reach distinctly from its banks. Then fly,—
And as you sail, turn back; but still keep on
Your way along the Euphrates. If you reach
The land of Paphlagonia, where the queen
Is safe with my three sons in Cotta's court,
Say what you *saw* at parting, and request
That she remember what I *said* at one
Parting more mournful still.
Pan. That royal hand!
Let me then once more press it to my lips:
And these poor soldiers who throng round you, and
Would fain die with you!
[*The Soldiers and* PANIA *throng round him, kissing his hand and the hem of his robe.*
Sar. My best! my last friends!
Let 's not unman each other—part at once:
All farewells should be sudden, when for ever,
Else they make an eternity of moments,
And clog the last sad sands of life with tears.
Hence, and be happy: trust me, I am not
Now to be pitied; or far more for what
Is past than present;—for the future, 't is
In the hands of the deities, if such
There be: I shall know soon. Farewell—Farewell. [*Exeunt* PANIA *and Soldiers.*
Myr. These men were honest: it is comfort still
That our last looks should be on loving faces.

Sar. And *lovely* ones, my beautiful ! — but hear me !
If at this moment — for we now are on
The brink, thou feel'st an inward shrinking from
This leap through flame into the future, say it:
I shall not love thee less; nay, perhaps more,
For yielding to thy nature: and there 's time
Yet for thee to escape hence.
Myr. Shall I light
One of the torches which lie heap'd beneath
The ever-burning lamp that burns without
Before Baal's shrine, in the adjoining hall ?
Sar. Do so. Is that thy answer ?
Myr. Thou shalt see.
[*Exit* MYRRHA.
Sar. (*solus*). She 's firm. My fathers ! whom I will rejoin,
It may be, purified by death from some
Of the gross stains of too material being,
I would not leave your ancient first abode
To the defilement of usurping bondmen;
If I have not kept your inheritance
As ye bequeath'd it, this bright part of it,
Your treasure, your abode, your sacred relics
Of arms, and records, monuments, and spoils,
In which *they* would have revell'd, I bear with me
To you in that absorbing element,
Which most personifies the soul as leaving
The least of matter unconsumed before
Its fiery workings: and the light of this
Most royal of funereal pyres shall be
Not a mere pillar form'd of cloud and flame,
A beacon in the horizon for a day,
And then a mount of ashes, but a light
To lesson ages, rebel nations, and
Voluptuous princes. Time shall quench full many
A people's records, and a hero's acts;
Sweep empire after empire, like this first
Of empires, into nothing; but even then
Shall spare this deed of mine, and hold it up
A problem few dare imitate, and none
Despise — but, it may be, avoid the life
Which led to such a consummation.

MYRRHA *returns with a lighted Torch in one Hand, and a Cup in the other.*

Myr. Lo !
I 've lit the lamp which lights us to the stars.
Sar. And the cup ?
Myr. 'T is my country's custom to
Make a libation to the gods.
Sar. And mine
To make libations amongst men. I 've not
Forgot the custom; and although alone,
Will drain one draught in memory of many
A joyous banquet past.

[SARDANAPALUS *takes the cup, and after drinking and tinkling the reversed cup, as a drop falls, exclaims* —

And this libation
Is for the excellent Beleses.
Myr. Why
Dwells thy mind rather upon that man's name
Than on his mate's in villany ?
Sar. The one
Is a mere soldier, a mere tool, a kind
Of human sword in a friend's hand; the other
Is master-mover of his warlike puppet:
But I dismiss them from my mind. — Yet pause,
My Myrrha ! dost thou truly follow me,
Freely and fearlessly ?
Myr. And dost thou think
A Greek girl dare not do for love that which
An Indian widow braves for custom ?
Sar. Then
We but await the signal.
Myr. It is long
In sounding.
Sar. Now, farewell; one last embrace.
Myr. Embrace, but *not* the last; there is one more.
Sar. True, the commingling fire will mix our ashes.
Myr. And pure as is my love to thee, shall they,
Purged from the dross of earth and earthly passion,
Mix pale with thine. A single thought yet irks me.
Sar. Say it.
Myr. It is that no kind hand will gather
The dust of both into one urn.
Sar. The better:
Rather let them be borne abroad upon
The winds of heaven, and scatter'd into air,

Than be polluted more by human hands
Of slaves and traitors. In this blazing palace,
And its enormous walls of reeking ruin,
We leave a nobler monument than Egypt
Hath piled in her brick mountains, o'er dead kings,
Or *kine*, for none know whether those proud piles
Be for their monarch, or their ox-god Apis;
So much for monuments that have forgotten
Their very record!
Myr. Then farewell, thou earth!
And loveliest spot of earth! farewell, Ionia!
Be thou still free and beautiful, and far
Aloof from desolation! My last prayer
Was for thee, my last thoughts, save *one*, were of thee!
Sar. And that?
Myr. Is yours.
[*The trumpet of* PANIA *sounds without.*
Sar. Hark!
Myr. *Now!*
Sar. Adieu, Assyria!
I loved thee well, my own, my fathers' land,
And better as my country than my kingdom.
I sated thee with peace and joys; and this
Is my reward! and now I owe thee nothing,
Not even a grave. [*He mounts the pile.*
Now, Myrrha!
Myr. Art thou ready?
Sar. As the torch in thy grasp.
[MYRRHA *fires the pile.*
Myr. 'T is fired! I come.
[*As* MYRRHA *springs forward to throw herself into the flames, the Curtain falls.*

THE TWO FOSCARI

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY

'The *father* softens, but the *governor* 's resolved.' — CRITIC.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN

FRANCIS FOSCARI, *Doge of Venice.*
JACOPO FOSCARI, *Son of the Doge.*
JAMES LOREDANO, *a Patrician.*
MARCO MEMMO, *a Chief of the Forty.*
BARBARIGO, *a Senator.*
Other Senators, The Council of Ten, Guards, Attendants, etc., etc.

WOMAN

MARINA, *Wife of young* FOSCARI.

Scene — the Ducal Palace, Venice.

ACT I

SCENE I

A Hall in the Ducal Palace.

Enter LOREDANO *and* BARBARIGO, *meeting.*

Lor. Where is the prisoner?
Bar. Reposing from
The Question.
Lor. The hour 's past — fix'd yesterday
For the resumption of his trial. — Let us
Rejoin our colleagues in the council, and
Urge his recall.
Bar. Nay, let him profit by
A few brief minutes for his tortured limbs;
He was o'erwrought by the Question yesterday,
And may die under it if now repeated.
Lor. Well?
Bar. I yield not to you in love of justice
Or hate of the ambitious Foscari,
Father and son, and all their noxious race;
But the poor wretch has suffer'd beyond nature's
Most stoical endurance.
Lor. Without owning
His crime?
Bar. Perhaps without committing any.
But he avow'd the letter to the Duke
Of Milan, and his sufferings half atone for
Such weakness.
Lor. We shall see.
Bar. You, Loredano,
Pursue hereditary hate too far.
Lor. How far?
Bar. To extermination.
Lor. When they are
Extinct, you may say this. — Let 's in to council.
Bar. Yet pause — the number of our colleagues is not
Complete yet; two are wanting ere we can
Proceed.
Lor. And the chief judge, the Doge?
Bar. No — he,
With more than Roman fortitude, is ever
First at the board in this unhappy process
Against his last and only son.
Lor. True — true —
His *last*.
Bar. Will nothing move you?
Lor. *Feels he*, think you?
Bar. He shows it not.
Lor. I have marked *that* — the wretch

Bar. But yesterday, I hear, on his return
To the ducal chambers, as he pass'd the threshold,
The old man fainted.
Lor. It begins to work, then.
Bar. The work is half your own.
Lor. And should be *all* mine —
My father and my uncle are no more.
Bar. I have read their epitaph, which says they died
By poison.
Lor. When the Doge declared that he
Should never deem himself a sovereign till
The death of Peter Loredano, both
The brothers sicken'd shortly: he *is* sovereign.
Bar. A wretched one.
Lor. What should they be who make
Orphans?
Bar. But *did* the Doge make you so?
Lor. Yes.
Bar. What solid proofs?
Lor. When princes set themselves
To work in secret, proofs and process are
Alike made difficult; but I have such
Of the first as shall make the second needless.
Bar. But you will move by law?
Lor. By all the laws
Which he would leave us.
Bar. They are such in this
Our state as render retribution easier
Than 'mongst remoter nations. Is it true
That you have written in your books of commerce
(The wealthy practice of our highest nobles),
'Doge Foscari, my debtor for the deaths
Of Marco and Pietro Loredano,
My sire and uncle?'
Lor. It is written thus.
Bar. And will you leave it unerased?
Lor. Till balanced.
Bar. And how?

[*Two Senators pass over the stage, as in their way to 'the Hall of the Council of Ten.'*

Lor. You see the number is complete.
Follow me. [*Exit* LOREDANO.
Bar. (*solus*). Follow *thee!* I have follow'd long
Thy path of desolation, as the wave
Sweeps after that before it, alike whelming
The wreck that creaks to the wild winds, and wretch
Who shrieks within its riven ribs, as gush
The waters through them; but this son and sire
Might move the elements to pause, and yet
Must I on hardily like them — Oh! would
I could as blindly and remorselessly! —
Lo, where he comes! Be still, my heart! they are
Thy foes, must be thy victims: wilt thou beat
For those who almost broke thee?

Enter Guards, with young FOSCARI *as prisoner, etc.*

Guard. Let him rest.
Signor, take time.
Jac. Fos. I thank thee, friend, I'm feeble;
But thou may'st stand reproved.
Guard. I'll stand the hazard.
Jac. Fos. That's kind: I meet some pity, but no mercy;
This is the first.
Guard. And might be last, did they
Who rule behold us.
Bar. (*advancing to the Guard*). There is one who does:
Yet fear not; I will neither be thy judge
Nor thy accuser. Though the hour is past,
Wait their last summons — I am of 'the Ten,'
And waiting for that summons, sanction you
Even by my presence: when the last call sounds,
We'll in together. — Look well to the prisoner!
Jac. Fos. What voice is that? — 'Tis Barbarigo's! Ah!
Our house's foe, and one of my few judges.
Bar. To balance such a foe, if such there be,
Thy father sits amongst thy judges.
Jac. Fos. True,
He judges.
Bar. Then deem not the laws too harsh
Which yield so much indulgence to a sire
As to allow his voice in such high matter
As the state's safety —
Jac. Fos. And his son's. I'm faint;
Let me approach, I pray you, for a breath
Of air, yon window which o'erlooks the waters.

Enter an Officer, who whispers BARBARIGO.

Bar. (*to the Guard*). Let him approach. I must not speak with him
Further than thus: I have transgress'd my duty

In this brief parley, and must now redeem it
Within the Council Chamber.
[*Exit* BARBARIGO.
[*Guard conducting* JACOPO FOSCARI *to the window.*
Guard. There, sir, 't is
Open — How feel you?
Jac. Fos. Like a boy — Oh Venice!
Guard. And your limbs?
Jac. Fos. Limbs! how often have they borne me
Bounding o'er yon blue tide, as I have skimm'd
The gondola along in childish race,
And, masqued as a young gondolier, amidst
My gay competitors, noble as I,
Raced for our pleasure in the pride of strength;
While the fair populace of crowding beauties,
Plebeian as patrician, cheer'd us on
With dazzling smiles, and wishes audible,
And waving kerchiefs, and applauding hands,
Even to the goal! — How many a time have I
Cloven with arm still lustier, breast more daring,
The wave all roughen'd; with a swimmer's stroke
Flinging the billows back from my drench'd hair,
And laughing from my lip the audacious brine,
Which kiss'd it like a wine-cup, rising o'er
The waves as they arose, and prouder still
The loftier they uplifted me; and oft,
In wantonness of spirit, plunging down
Into their green and glassy gulfs, and making
My way to shells and sea-weed, all unseen
By those above, till they wax'd fearful; then
Returning with my grasp full of such tokens
As show'd that I had search'd the deep: exulting,
With a far-dashing stroke, and drawing deep
The long-suspended breath, again I spurn'd
The foam which broke around me, and pursued
My track like a sea-bird. — I was a boy then.
Guard. Be a man now: there never was more need
Of manhood's strength.
Jac. Fos. (*looking from the lattice*). My beautiful, my own,
My only Venice — *this is breath!* Thy breeze,
Thine Adrian sea-breeze, how it fans my face!
Thy very winds feel native to my veins,
And cool them into calmness! How unlike
The hot gales of the horrid Cyclades,
Which howl'd about my Candiote dungeon and
Made my heart sick.
Guard. I see the colour comes
Back to your cheek: Heaven send you strength to bear
What more may be imposed! — I dread to think on 't.
Jac. Fos. They will not banish me again? — No — no,
Let them wring on; I am strong yet.
Guard. Confess,
And the rack will be spared you.
Jac. Fos. I confess'd
Once — twice before: both times they exiled me.
Guard. And the third time will slay you.
Jac. Fos. Let them do so,
So I be buried in my birth-place: better
Be ashes here than aught that lives elsewhere.
Guard. And can you so much love the soil which hates you?
Jac. Fos. The soil! — Oh no, it is the seed of the soil
Which persecutes me; but my native earth
Will take me as a mother to her arms.
I ask no more than a Venetian grave,
A dungeon, what they will, so it be here.

Enter an Officer.

Offi. Bring in the prisoner!
Guard. Signor, you hear the order.
Jac. Fos. Ay, I am used to such a summons: 't is
The third time they have tortured me: — then lend me
Thine arm. [*To the Guard.*
Offi. Take mine, sir; 't is my duty to
Be nearest to your person.
Jac. Fos. You! — you are he
Who yesterday presided o'er my pangs —
Away! — I 'll walk alone.

Offi. As you please, signor;
The sentence was not of my signing, but
I dared not disobey the Council when
They —
Jac. Fos. Bade thee stretch me on their horrid engine.
I pray thee touch me not — that is, just now;
The time will come they will renew that order,
But keep off from me till 't is issued. As
I look upon thy hands my curdling limbs
Quiver with the anticipated wrenching,
And the cold drops strain through my brow, as if —
But onward — I have borne it — I can bear it. —
How looks my father?
Offi. With his wonted aspect.
Jac. Fos. So does the earth, and sky, the blue of ocean,
The brightness of our city, and her domes,
The mirth of her Piazza; even now
Its merry hum of nations pierces here,
Even here, into these chambers of the unknown
Who govern, and the unknown and the unnumber'd
Judged and destroy'd in silence, — all things wear
The self-same aspect, to my very sire!
Nothing can sympathise with Foscari,
Not even a Foscari. — Sir, I attend you.
[*Exeunt* JACOPO FOSCARI, *Officer, etc.*

Enter MEMMO *and another Senator.*

Mem. He 's gone — we are too late: — think you 'the Ten'
Will sit for any length of time to-day?
Sen. They say the prisoner is most obdurate,
Persisting in his first avowal; but
More I know not.
Mem. And that is much; the secrets
Of yon terrific chamber are as hidden
From us, the premier nobles of the state,
As from the people.
Sen. Save the wonted rumours,
Which — like the tales of spectres that are rife
Near ruin'd buildings — never have been proved,
Nor wholly disbelieved: men know as little
Of the state's real acts as of the grave's
Unfathom'd mysteries.
Mem. But with length of time
We gain a step in knowledge, and I look
Forward to be one day of the decemvirs.
Sen. Or Doge?
Mem. Why, no; not if I can avoid it.
Sen. 'T is the first station of the state, and may
Be lawfully desired, and lawfully
Attain'd by noble aspirants.
Mem. To such
I leave it; though born noble, my ambition
Is limited: I 'd rather be an unit
Of an united and imperial 'Ten,'
Than shine a lonely, though a gilded cipher. —
Whom have we here? the wife of Foscari?

Enter MARINA, *with a female Attendant.*

Mar. What, no one? — I am wrong, there still are two;
But they are senators.
Mem. Most noble lady,
Command us.
Mar. *I command!* — Alas! my life
Has been one long entreaty, and a vain one.
Mem. I understand thee, but I must not answer.
Mar. (*fiercely*). True — none dare answer here save on the rack,
Or question save those —
Mem. (*interrupting her*). High-born dame! bethink thee
Where thou now art.
Mar. Where I now am! It was
My husband's father's palace.
Mem. The Duke's palace.
Mar. And his son's prison; — true, I have not forgot it;
And if there were no other nearer, bitterer
Remembrances, would thank the illustrious Memmo
For pointing out the pleasures of the place.
Mem. Be calm!
Mar. (*looking up towards heaven*). I am; but oh, thou eternal God!
Canst *thou* continue so, with such a world?
Mem. Thy husband yet may be absolved.
Mar. He is,
In heaven. I pray you, signor senator,
Speak not of that; you are a man of office,
So is the Doge; he has a son at stake,
Now, at this moment, and I have a husband,
Or had; they are there within, or were at least

An hour since, face to face, as judge and culprit:
Will *he* condemn *him?*
Mem. I trust not.
Mar. But if
He does not, there are those will sentence both.
Mem. They can.
Mar. And with them power and will are one
In wickedness: — my husband 's lost!
Mem. Not so;
Justice is judge in Venice.
Mar. If it were so,
There now would be no Venice. But let it
Live on, so the good die not, till the hour
Of nature's summons; but 'the Ten's' is quicker,
And we must wait on't. Ah! a voice of wail! [*A faint cry within.*
Sen. Hark!
Mem. 'T was a cry of —
Mar. No, no; not my husband's —
Not Foscari's.
Mem. The voice was —
Mar. *Not his:* no.
He shriek! No; that should be his father's part,
Not his — not his — he 'll die in silence.
[*A faint groan again within.*
Mem. What!
Again?
Mar. *His* voice! it seem'd so: I will not
Believe it. Should he shrink, I cannot cease
To love; but — no — no — no — it must have been
A fearful pang which wrung a groan from him.
Sen. And, feeling for thy husband's wrongs, wouldst thou
Have him bear more than mortal pain, in silence?
Mar. We all must bear our tortures. I have not
Left barren the great house of Foscari,
Though they sweep both the Doge and son from life;
I have endured as much in giving life
To those who will succeed them, as they can
In leaving it: but mine were joyful pangs:
And yet they wrung me till I *could* have shriek'd,
But did not; for my hope was to bring forth
Heroes and would not welcome them with tears.
Mem. All 's silent now.
Mar. Perhaps all 's over; but
I will not deem it: he hath nerved himself,
And now defies them.

Enter an Officer hastily.

Mem. How now, friend, what seek you?
Offi. A leech. The prisoner has fainted.
[*Exit Officer.*
Mem. Lady,
'T were better to retire.
Sen. (*offering to assist her*). I pray thee do so.
Mar. Off! *I* will tend him.
Mem. You! Remember, lady!
Ingress is given to none within those chambers,
Except 'the Ten,' and their familiars.
Mar. Well,
I know that none who enter there return
As they have enter'd — many never, but
They shall not balk my entrance.
Mem. Alas! this
Is but to expose yourself to harsh repulse,
And worse suspense.
Mar. Who shall oppose me?
Mem They
Whose duty 't is to do so.
Mar. 'T is *their* duty
To trample on all human feelings, all
Ties which bind man to man, to emulate
The fiends who will one day requite them in
Variety of torturing! Yet I 'll pass.
Mem. It is impossible.
Mar. That shall be tried.
Despair defies even despotism: there is
That in my heart would make its way through hosts
With levell'd spears; and think you a few jailors
Shall put me from my path? Give me, then, way;
This is the Doge's palace; I am wife
Of the Duke's son, the *innocent* Duke's son,
And they shall hear this!
Mem. It will only serve
More to exasperate his judges.
Mar. What
Are *judges* who give way to anger? they
Who do so are assassins. Give me way.
[*Exit* MARINA.
Sen. Poor lady!
Mem. 'T is mere desperation: she
Will not be admitted o'er the threshold.

Sen. And
Even if she be so, cannot save her husband.
But, see, the officer returns.
[*The Officer passes over the stage with another person.*
Mem. I hardly
Thought that 'the Ten' had even this touch of pity,
Or would permit assistance to this sufferer.
Sen. Pity! Is 't pity to recall to feeling
The wretch too happy to escape to death
By the compassionate trance, poor nature's last
Resource against the tyranny of pain?
Mem. I marvel they condemn him not at once.
Sen. That 's not their policy: they 'd have him live,
Because he fears not death; and banish him,
Because all earth, except his native land,
To him is one wide prison, and each breath
Of foreign air he draws seems a slow poison,
Consuming but not killing.
Mem. Circumstance
Confirms his crimes, but he avows them not.
Sen. None, save the Letter, which he says was written,
Address'd to Milan's duke, in the full knowledge
That it would fall into the senate's hands,
And thus he should be re-convey'd to Venice.
Mem. But as a culprit.
Sen. Yes, but to his country;
And that was all he sought — so he avouches.
Mem. The accusation of the bribes was proved.
Sen. Not clearly, and the charge of homicide
Has been annull'd by the death-bed confession
Of Nicolas Erizzo, who slew the late
Chief of 'the Ten.'
Mem. Then why not clear him?
Sen. That
They ought to answer; for it is well known
That Almoro Donato, as I said,
Was slain by Erizzo for private vengeance.
Mem. There must be more in this strange process than
The apparent crimes of the accused disclose —
But here come two of 'the Ten;' let us retire. [*Exeunt* MEMMO *and Senator.*

Enter LOREDANO *and* BARBARIGO.

Bar. (*addressing* LOR.). That were too much: believe me, 't was not meet
The trial should go further at this moment.
Lor. And so the Council must break up, and Justice
Pause in her full career, because a woman
Breaks in on our deliberations?
Bar. No,
That 's not the cause; you saw the prisoner's state.
Lor. And had he not recover'd?
Bar. To relapse
Upon the least renewal.
Lor. 'T was not tried.
Bar. 'T is vain to murmur; the majority
In council were against you.
Lor. Thanks to you, sir,
And the old ducal dotard, who combined
The worthy voices which o'er-ruled my own.
Bar. I am a judge; but must confess that part
Of our stern duty, which prescribes the Question,
And bids us sit and see its sharp infliction,
Makes me wish —
Lor. What?
Bar. That *you* would *sometimes* feel,
As I do always.
Lor. Go to, you 're a child,
Infirm of feeling as of purpose, blown
About by every breath, shook by a sigh,
And melted by a tear — a precious judge
For Venice! and a worthy statesman to
Be partner in my policy!
Bar. He shed
No tears.
Lor. He cried out twice.
Bar. A saint had done so,
Even with the crown of glory in his eye,
At such inhuman artifice of pain
As was forced on him; but he did not cry
For pity; not a word nor groan escaped him,
And those two shrieks were not in supplication,
But wrung from pangs, and follow'd by no prayers.
Lor. He mutter'd many times between his teeth,
But inarticulately.
Bar. That I heard not;
You stood more near him.

Lor. I did so.
Bar. Methought,
To my surprise too, you were touch'd with mercy,
And were the first to call out for assistance
When he was failing.
Lor. I believed that swoon
His last.
Bar. And have I not oft heard thee name
His and his father's death your nearest wish?
Lor. If he dies innocent, that is to say,
With his guilt unavow'd, he 'll be lamented.
Bar. What, wouldst thou slay his memory?
Lor. Wouldst thou have
His state descend to his children, as it must,
If he die unattainted?
Bar. War with *them* too?
Lor. With all their house, till theirs or mine are nothing.
Bar. And the deep agony of his pale wife,
And the repress'd convulsion of the high
And princely brow of his old father, which
Broke forth in a slight shuddering, though rarely,
Or in some clammy drops, soon wiped away
In stern serenity — these moved you not?
[*Exit* Loredano.
He 's silent in his hate, as Foscari
Was in his suffering; and the poor wretch moved me
More by his silence than a thousand outcries
Could have effected. 'T was a dreadful sight
When his distracted wife broke through into
The hall of our tribunal, and beheld
What we could scarcely look upon, long used
To such sights. I must think no more of this,
Lest I forget in this compassion for
Our foes their former injuries, and lose
The hold of vengeance Loredano plans
For him and me; but mine would be content
With lesser retribution than he thirsts for,
And I would mitigate his deeper hatred
To milder thoughts. But for the present, Foscari
Has a short hourly respite, granted at
The instance of the elders of the Council,
Moved doubtless by his wife's appearance in
The hall, and his own sufferings. — Lo! they come:
How feeble and forlorn! I cannot bear
To look on them again in this extremity.
I 'll hence, and try to soften Loredano.
[*Exit* Barbarigo.

ACT II

Scene I

A Hall in the Doge's *Palace.*

The Doge *and a* Senator.

Sen. Is it your pleasure to sign the report
Now, or postpone it till to-morrow?
Doge. Now;
I overlook'd it yesterday: it wants
Merely the signature. Give me the pen —
[*The* Doge *sits down and signs the paper.*
There, signor.
Sen. (*looking at the paper*). You have forgot; it is not signed.
Doge. Not signed? Ah, I perceive my eyes begin
To wax more weak with age. I did not see
That I had dipp'd the pen without effect.
Sen. (*dipping the pen into the ink, and placing the paper before the* Doge). Your hand, too, shakes, my lord: allow me, thus —
Doge. 'T is done, I thank you.
Sen. Thus the act confirm'd
By you and by 'the Ten' gives peace to Venice.
Doge. 'T is long since she enjoy'd it: may it be
As long ere she resume her arms!
Sen. 'T is almost
Thirty-four years of nearly ceaseless warfare
With the Turk, or the powers of Italy;
The state had need of some repose.
Doge. No doubt:
I found her Queen of Ocean, and I leave her
Lady of Lombardy: it is a comfort
That I have added to her diadem
The gems of Brescia and Ravenna; Crema

And Bergamo no less are hers; her realm
By land has grown by thus much in my reign,
While her sea-sway has not shrunk.
Sen. 'T is most true,
And merits all our country's gratitude.
Doge. Perhaps so.
Sen. Which should be made manifest.
Doge. I have not complain'd, sir.
Sen. My good lord, forgive me.
Doge. For what?
Sen. My heart bleeds for you.
Doge. For me, signor?
Sen. And for your —
Doge. Stop!
Sen. It must have way, my lord:
I have too many duties towards you
And all your house, for past and present kindness,
Not to feel deeply for your son.
Doge. Was this
In your commission?
Sen. What, my lord?
Doge. This prattle
Of things you know not: but the treaty 's sign'd;
Return with it to them who sent you.
Sen. I
Obey. I had in charge, too, from the Council
That you would fix an hour for their re-union.
Doge. Say, when they will — now, even at this moment,
If it so please them: I am the state's servant.
Sen. They would accord some time for your repose.
Doge. I have no repose; that is, none which shall cause
The loss of an hour's time unto the state.
Let them meet when they will, I shall be found
Where I should be, and *what* I have been ever. [*Exit* Senator.
[*The* Doge *remains in silence.*

Enter an Attendant.

Att. Prince!
Doge. Say on.
Att. The illustrious lady Foscari
Requests an audience.
Doge. Bid her enter. Poor
Marina! [*Exit Attendant.*
[*The* Doge *remains in silence as before.*

Enter Marina.

Mar. I have ventured, father, on
Your privacy.
Doge. I have none from you, my child.
Command my time, when not commanded by
The state.
Mar. I wish'd to speak to you of *him.*
Doge. Your husband?
Mar. And your son.
Doge. Proceed, my daughter!
Mar. I had obtain'd permission from 'the Ten'
To attend my husband for a limited number
Of hours.
Doge. You had so.
Mar. 'T is revoked.
Doge. By whom?
Mar. 'The Ten.' — When we had reach'd 'the Bridge of Sighs,'
Which I prepared to pass with Foscari,
The gloomy guardian of that passage first
Demurr'd: a messenger was sent back to
'The Ten;' but as the court no longer sate,
And no permission had been given in writing,
I was thrust back, with the assurance that
Until that high tribunal re-assembled,
The dungeon walls must still divide us.
Doge. True,
The form has been omitted in the haste
With which the court adjourn'd; and till it meets,
'T is dubious.
Mar. Till it meets! and when it meets,
They 'll torture him again; and he and *I*
Must purchase by renewal of the rack
The interview of husband and of wife,
The holiest tie beneath the heavens! — Oh God!
Dost thou see this?
Doge. Child — child —
Mar. (*abruptly*). Call *me* not 'child!'
You soon will have no children — you deserve none —
You, who can talk thus calmly of a son
In circumstances which would call forth tears
Of blood from Spartans! Though these did not weep
Their boys who died in battle, is it written
That they beheld them perish piecemeal, nor
Stretch'd forth a hand to save them?
Doge. You behold me

I cannot weep — I would I could; but if
Each white hair on this head were a young life,
This ducal cap the diadem of earth,
This ducal ring with which I wed the waves
A talisman to still them — I 'd give them all
For him.
Mar. With less he surely might be saved.
Doge. That answer only shows you know not Venice.
Alas! how should you? she knows not herself,
In all her mystery. Hear me — they who aim
At Foscari, aim no less at his father;
The sire's destruction would not save the son;
They work by different means to the same end,
And that is — but they have not conquer'd yet.
Mar. But they have crush'd.
Doge. Nor crush'd as yet — I live.
Mar. And your son, — how long will he live?
Doge. I trust,
For all that yet is past, as many years
And happier than his father. The rash boy,
With womanish impatience to return,
Hath ruin'd all by that detected letter:
A high crime, which I neither can deny
Nor palliate, as parent or as Duke.
Had he but borne a little, little longer
His Candiote exile, I had hopes — he has quench'd them —
He must return.
Mar. To exile?
Doge. I have said it.
Mar. And can I not go with him?
Doge. You well know
This prayer of yours was twice denied before
By the assembled 'Ten,' and hardly now
Will be accorded to a third request,
Since aggravated errors on the part
Of your lord render them still more austere.
Mar. Austere? Atrocious! The old human fiends,
With one foot in the grave, with dim eyes, strange
To tears save drops of dotage, with long white
And scanty hairs, and shaking hands, and heads
As palsied as their hearts are hard, they counsel,
Cabal, and put men's lives out, as if life
Were no more than the feelings long extinguish'd
In their accursèd bosoms.
Doge. You know not —
Mar. I do — I do — and so should you, methinks —
That these are demons: could it be else that
Men, who have been of women born and suckled —
Who have loved, or talk'd at least of love — have given
Their hands in sacred vows — have danced their babes
Upon their knees, perhaps have mourn'd above them —
In pain, in peril, or in death — who are,
Or were at least in seeming, human, could
Do as they have done by yours, and you yourself,
You, who abet them?
Doge. I forgive this, for
You know not what you say.
Mar. *You* know it well,
And feel it nothing.
Doge. I have borne so much,
That words have ceased to shake me.
Mar. Oh, no doubt!
You have seen your son's blood flow, and your flesh shook not:
And, after that, what are a woman's words?
No more than woman's tears, that they should shake you.
Doge. Woman, this clamorous grief of thine, I tell thee,
Is no more in the balance weigh'd with that
Which — but I pity thee, my poor Marina!
Mar. Pity my husband, or I cast it from me;
Pity thy son! *Thou* pity! — 't is a word
Strange to thy heart — how came it on thy lips?
Doge. I must bear these reproaches, though they wrong me.
Couldst thou but read —
Mar. 'T is not upon thy brow,
Nor in thine eyes, nor in thine acts, — where then
Should I behold this sympathy? or shall?
Doge (*pointing downwards*). There!
Mar. In the earth?

Doge. To which I am tending: when
It lies upon this heart, far lightlier, though
Loaded with marble, than the thoughts which press it
Now, you will know me better.
Mar. Are you, then,
Indeed, thus to be pitied?
Doge. Pitied! None
Shall ever use that base word, with which men
Cloke their soul's hoarded triumph, as a fit one
To mingle with my name; that name shall be,
As far as *I* have borne it, what it was
When I received it.
Mar. But for the poor children
Of him thou canst not, or thou wilt not save,
You were the last to bear it.
Doge. Would it were so!
Better for him he never had been born;
Better for me. — I have seen our house dishonour'd.
Mar. That 's false! A truer, nobler, trustier heart,
More loving, or more loyal, never beat
Within a human breast. I would not change
My exiled, persecuted, mangled husband,
Oppress'd but not disgraced, crush'd, overwhelm'd,
Alive, or dead, for prince or paladin
In story or in fable, with a world
To back his suit. Dishonour'd! — *he* dishonour'd!
I tell thee, Doge, 't is Venice is dishonour'd;
His name shall be her foulest, worst reproach,
For what he suffers, not for what he did.
'T is ye who are all traitors, tyrant! — ye!
Did you but love your country like this victim,
Who totters back in chains to tortures and
Submits to all things rather than to exile,
You 'd fling yourselves before him, and implore
His grace for your enormous guilt.
Doge. He was
Indeed all you have said. I better bore
The deaths of the two sons Heaven took from me,
Than Jacopo's disgrace.
Mar. That word again?
Doge. Has he not been condemn'd?
Mar. Is none but guilt so?
Doge. Time may restore his memory — I would hope so.
He was my pride, my — but 't is useless now —
I am not given to tears, but wept for joy
When he was born: those drops were ominous.
Mar. I say he 's innocent! And were he not so,
Is our own blood and kin to shrink from us
In fatal moments?
Doge. I shrank not from him:
But I have other duties than a father's;
The state would not dispense me from those duties;
Twice I demanded it, but was refused:
They must then be fulfill'd.

Enter an Attendant.

Att. A message from
'The Ten.'
Doge. Who bears it?
Att. Noble Loredano.
Doge. He! — but admit him.
[*Exit Attendant.*
Mar. Must I then retire?
Doge. Perhaps it is not requisite, if this
Concerns your husband, and if not — Well, signor,
Your pleasure! [*To* LOREDANO *entering.*
Lor. I bear that of 'the Ten.'
Doge. They
Have chosen well their envoy.
Lor. 'T is *their* choice
Which leads me here.
Doge. It does their wisdom honour,
And no less to their courtesy. — Proceed.
Lor. We have decided.
Doge. We?
Lor. 'The Ten' in council.
Doge. What! have they met again, and met without
Apprising me?
Lor. They wish'd to spare your feelings,
No less than age.
Doge. That 's new — when spared they either?
I thank them, notwithstanding.
Lor. You know well
That they have power to act at their discretion,
With or without the presence of the Doge.
Doge. 'T is some years since I learn'd this, long before

I became Doge, or dream'd of such advancement.
You need not school me, signor; I sate in
That council when you were a young patrician.
Lor. True, in my father's time; I have heard him and
The admiral, his brother, say as much.
Your highness may remember them; they both
Died suddenly.
Doge. And if they did so, better
So die than live on lingeringly in pain.
Lor. No doubt; yet most men like to live their days out.
Doge. And did not they?
Lor. The grave knows best: they died,
As I said, suddenly.
Doge. Is that so strange,
That you repeat the word emphatically?
Lor. So far from strange, that never was there death
In my mind half so natural as theirs.
Think *you* not so?
Doge. What should I think of mortals?
Lor. That they have mortal foes.
Doge. I understand you;
Your sires were mine, and you are heir in all things.
Lor. You best know if I should be so.
Doge. I do.
Your fathers were my foes, and I have heard
Foul rumours were abroad; I have also read
Their epitaph, attributing their deaths
To poison. 'T is perhaps as true as most
Inscriptions upon tombs, and yet no less
A fable.
Lor. Who dares say so?
Doge. I! — 'T is true
Your fathers were mine enemies, as bitter
As their son e'er can be, and I no less
Was theirs; but I was *openly* their foe:
I never work'd by plot in council, nor
Cabal in commonwealth, nor secret means
Of practice against life by steel or drug.
The proof is, your existence.
Lor. I fear not.
Doge. You have no cause, being what I am; but were I
That you would have me thought, you long ere now
Were past the sense of fear. Hate on; I care not.
Lor. I never yet knew that a noble's life
In Venice had to dread a Doge's frown,
That is, by open means.
Doge. But I, good signor,
Am, or at least *was*, more than a mere duke
In blood, in mind, in means; and that they know
Who dreaded to elect me, and have since
Striven all they dare to weigh me down: be sure,
Before or since that period, had I held you
At so much price as to require your absence,
A word of mine had set such spirits to work
As would have made you nothing. But in all things
I have observed the strictest reverence;
Not for the laws alone, for those *you* have strain'd
(I do not speak of *you* but as a single
Voice of the many) somewhat beyond what
I could enforce for my authority,
Were I disposed to brawl; but, as I said,
I have observed with veneration, like
A priest's for the high altar, even unto
The sacrifice of my own blood and quiet,
Safety, and all save honour, the decrees,
The health, the pride, and welfare of the state.
And now, sir, to your business.
Lor. 'T is decreed,
That, without farther repetition of
The Question, or continuance of the trial,
Which only tends to show how stubborn guilt is
('The Ten,' dispensing with the stricter law
Which still prescribes the Question till a full
Confession, and the prisoner partly having
Avow'd his crime in not denying that
The letter to the Duke of Milan's his),
James Foscari return to banishment,
And sail in the same galley which convey'd him.
Mar. Thank God! At least they will not drag him more
Before that horrible tribunal. Would he
But think so, to my mind the happiest doom,
Not he alone, but all who dwell here, could
Desire, were to escape from such a land.
Doge. That is not a Venetian thought, my daughter.

Mar. No, 't was too human. May I share his exile?
Lor. Of this 'the Ten' said nothing.
Mar. So I thought:
That were too human, also. But it was not
Inhibited?
Lor. It was not named.
Mar. (*to the Doge*). Then, father,
Surely you can obtain or grant me thus much: [*To* Loredano.
And you, sir, not oppose my prayer to be
Permitted to accompany my husband.
Doge. I will endeavour.
Mar. And you, signor?
Lor. Lady!
'T is not for me to anticipate the pleasure
Of the tribunal.
Mar. Pleasure! what a word
To use for the decrees of —
Doge. Daughter, know you
In what a presence you pronounce these things?
Mar. A prince's and his subject's.
Lor. Subject!
Mar. Oh!
It galls you: — well, you are his equal, as
You think; but that you are not, nor would be,
Were he a peasant: — well, then, you 're a prince,
A princely noble; and what then am I?
Lor. The offspring of a noble house.
Mar. And wedded
To one as noble. What, or whose, then, is
The presence that should silence my free thoughts?
Lor. The presence of your husband's judges.
Doge. And
The deference due even to the lightest word
That falls from those who rule in Venice.
Mar. Keep
Those maxims for your mass of sacred mechanics,
Your merchants, your Dalmatian and Greek slaves,
Your tributaries, your dumb citizens,
And mask'd nobility, your sbirri, and
Your spies, your galley and your other slaves,
To whom your midnight carryings off and drownings,
Your dungeons next the palace roofs, or under
The water's level; your mysterious meetings,
And unknown dooms, and sudden executions,
Your 'Bridge of Sighs,' your strangling chamber, and
Your torturing instruments, have made ye seem
The beings of another and worse world!
Keep such for them: I fear ye not. I know ye;
Have known and proved your worst, in the infernal
Process of my poor husband! Treat me as
Ye treated him: — you did so, in so dealing
With him. Then what have I to fear *from* you,
Even if I were of fearful nature, which
I trust I am not?
Doge. You hear, she speaks wildly.
Mar. Not wisely, yet not wildly.
Lor. Lady! words
Utter'd within these walls I bear no further
Than to the threshold, saving such as pass
Between the Duke and me on the state's service.
Doge! have you aught in answer?
Doge. Something from
The Doge; it may be also from a parent.
Lor. My mission *here* is to the *Doge*.
Doge. Then say
The Doge will choose his own ambassador,
Or state in person what is meet; and for
The father —
Lor. I remember *mine*. — Farewell!
I kiss the hands of the illustrious lady,
And bow me to the Duke. [*Exit* Loredano.
Mar. Are you content?
Doge. I am what you behold.
Mar. And that 's a mystery.
Doge. All things are so to mortals; who can read them
Save he who made? or, if they can, the few
And gifted spirits, who have studied long
That loathsome volume — man, and pored upon
Those black and bloody leaves, his heart and brain,
But learn a magic which recoils upon
The adept who pursues it. All the sins
We find in others, nature made our own;
All our advantages are those of fortune;
Birth, wealth, health, beauty, are her accidents,

And when we cry out against Fate, 't were well
We should remember Fortune can take nought
Save what she *gave* — the rest was nakedness,
And lusts, and appetites, and vanities,
The universal heritage, to battle
With as we may, and least in humblest stations,
Where hunger swallows all in one low want,
And the original ordinance, that man
Must sweat for his poor pittance, keeps all passions
Aloof, save fear of famine! All is low,
And false, and hollow — clay from first to last,
The prince's urn no less than potter's vessel.
Our fame is in men's breath, our lives upon
Less than their breath; our durance upon days,
Our days on seasons; our whole being on
Something which is not *us!* — So, we are slaves,
The greatest as the meanest — nothing rests
Upon our will; the will itself no less
Depends upon a straw than on a storm;
And when we think we lead, we are most led,
And still towards death, a thing which comes as much
Without our act or choice as birth, so that
Methinks we must have sinn'd in some old world,
And *this* is hell: the best is, that it is not
Eternal.
Mar. These are things we cannot judge
On earth.
Doge. And how then shall we judge each other,
Who are all earth, and I, who am call'd upon
To judge my son? I have administer'd
My country faithfully — victoriously —
I dare them to the proof, the *chart* of what
She was and is: my reign has doubled realms;
And, in reward, the gratitude of Venice
Has left, or is about to leave, *me* single.
Mar. And Foscari? I do not think of such things,
So I be left with him.
Doge. You shall be so;
Thus much they cannot well deny.
Mar. And if
They should, I will fly with him.
Doge. That can ne'er be.
And whither would you fly?
Mar. I know not, reck not —
To Syria, Egypt, to the Ottoman —
Any where, where we might respire unfetter'd,
And live nor girt by spies, nor liable
To edicts of inquisitors of state.
Doge. What, wouldst thou have a renegade for husband,
And turn him into traitor?
Mar. He is none!
The country is the traitress, which thrusts forth
Her best and bravest from her. Tyranny
Is far the worst of treasons. Dost thou deem
None rebels except subjects? The prince who
Neglects or violates his trust is more
A brigand than the robber-chief.
Doge. I cannot
Charge me with such a breach of faith.
Mar. No; thou
Observ'st, obey'st such laws as make old Draco's
A code of mercy by comparison.
Doge. I found the law; I did not make it. Were I
A subject, still I might find parts and portions
Fit for amendment; but as prince, I never
Would change, for the sake of my house, the charter
Left by our fathers.
Mar. Did they make it for
The ruin of their children?
Doge. Under such laws, Venice
Has risen to what she is — a state to rival
In deeds, and days, and sway, and, let me add,
In glory (for we have had Roman spirits
Amongst us), all that history has bequeath'd
Of Rome and Carthage in their best times, when
The people sway'd by senates.
Mar. Rather say,
Groan'd under the stern oligarchs.
Doge. Perhaps so;
But yet subdued the world: in such a state
An individual, be he richest of
Such rank as is permitted, or the meanest,
Without a name, is alike nothing, when
The policy, irrevocably tending
To one great end, must be maintain'd in vigour.

Mar. This means that you are more Doge than father.
Doge. It means, I am more citizen than either.
If we had not for many centuries
Had thousands of such citizens, and shall,
I trust, have still such, Venice were no city.
Mar. Accursèd be the city where the laws
Would stifle nature's!
Doge. Had I as many sons
As I have years, I would have given them all,
Not without feeling, but I would have given them
To the state's service, to fulfil her wishes
On the flood, in the field, or, if it must be,
As it, alas! has been, to ostracism,
Exile, or chains, or whatsoever worse
She might decree.
Mar. And this is patriotism?
To me it seems the worst barbarity.
Let me seek out my husband: the sage 'Ten,'
With all its jealousy, will hardly war
So far with a weak woman as deny me
A moment's access to his dungeon.
Doge. I'll
So far take on myself, as order that
You may be admitted.
Mar. And what shall I say
To Foscari from his father?
Doge. That he obey
The laws.
Mar. And nothing more? Will you not see him
Ere he depart? It may be the last time.
Doge. The last! — my boy! — the last time I shall see
My last of children! Tell him I will come.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III

Scene I

The prison of Jacopo Foscari.

Jac. Fos. (*solus*). No light, save yon faint gleam which shows me walls
Which never echo'd but to sorrow's sounds,
The sigh of long imprisonment, the step
Of feet on which the iron clank'd, the groan
Of death, the imprecation of despair!
And yet for this I have return'd to Venice,
With some faint hope, 't is true, that time, which wears
The marble down, had worn away the hate
Of men's hearts; but I knew them not, and here
Must I consume my own, which never beat
For Venice but with such a yearning as
The dove has for her distant nest, when wheeling
High in the air on her return to greet
Her callow brood. What letters are these which [*Approaching the wall.*
Are scrawl'd along the inexorable wall?
Will the gleam let me trace them? Ah! the names
Of my sad predecessors in this place,
The dates of their despair, the brief words of
A grief too great for many. This stone page
Holds like an epitaph their history;
And the poor captive's tale is graven on
His dungeon barrier, like the lover's record
Upon the bark of some tall tree, which bears
His own and his beloved's name. Alas!
I recognise some names familiar to me,
And blighted like to mine, which I will add,
Fittest for such a chronicle as this
Which only can be read, as writ, by wretches. [*He engraves his name.*

Enter a Familiar of 'the Ten.'

Fam. I bring you food.
Jac. Fos. I pray you set it down;
I am past hunger: but my lips are parch'd —
The water!
Fam. There.
Jac. Fos. (*after drinking*). I thank you: I am better.
Fam. I am commanded to inform you that
Your further trial is postponed.
Jac. Fos. Till when?
Fam. I know not. — It is also in my orders
That your illustrious lady be admitted.
Jac. Fos. Ah! they relent, then — I had ceased to hope it:
'T was time.

Enter Marina.

Mar. My best beloved!
Jac. Fos. (*embracing her*). My true wife,
And only friend! What happiness!
Mar. We'll part
No more.

Jac. Fos. How! wouldst thou share a dungeon?
Mar. Ay,
The rack, the grave, all — any thing with thee,
But the tomb last of all, for there we shall
Be ignorant of each other, yet I will
Share that — all things except new separation;
It is too much to have survived the first.
How dost thou? How are those worn limbs? Alas!
Why do I ask? Thy paleness —
Jac. Fos. ’T is the joy
Of seeing thee again so soon, and so
Without expectancy, has sent the blood
Back to my heart, and left my cheeks like thine,
For thou art pale too, my Marina!
Mar. ’T is
The gloom of this eternal cell, which never
Knew sunbeam, and the sallow sullen glare
Of the familiar’s torch, which seems akin
To darkness more than light, by lending to
The dungeon vapours its bituminous smoke,
Which cloud whate’er we gaze on, even thine eyes —
No, not thine eyes — they sparkle — how they sparkle!
Jac. Fos. And thine! — but I am blinded by the torch.
Mar. As I had been without it. Couldst thou see here?
Jac. Fos. Nothing at first; but use and time had taught me
Familiarity with what was darkness;
And the grey twilight of such glimmerings as
Glide through the crevices made by the winds
Was kinder to mine eyes than the full sun,
When gorgeously o’ergilding any towers
Save those of Venice: but a moment ere
Thou camest hither I was busy writing.
Mar. What?
Jac. Fos. My name: look, ’t is there — recorded next
The name of him who here preceded me,
If dungeon dates say true.
Mar. And what of him?
Jac. Fos. These walls are silent of men’s ends; they only
Seem to hint shrewdly of them. Such stern walls
Were never piled on high save o’er the dead,
Or those who soon must be so. — *What of him?*
Thou askest. — What of me? may soon be ask’d,
With the like answer — doubt and dreadful surmise —
Unless thou tell’st my tale.
Mar. *I speak* of thee!
Jac. Fos. And wherefore not? All then shall speak of me:
The tyranny of silence is not lasting,
And, though events be hidden, just men’s groans
Will burst all cerement, even a living grave’s!
I do not *doubt* my memory, but my life;
And neither do I fear.
Mar. Thy life is safe.
Jac. Fos. And liberty?
Mar. The mind should make its own.
Jac. Fos. That has a noble sound; but ’t is a sound,
A music most impressive, but too transient:
The mind is much, but is not all. The mind
Hath nerved me to endure the risk of death,
And torture positive, far worse than death
(If death be a deep sleep), without a groan,
Or with a cry which rather shamed my judges
Than me; but ’t is not all, for there are things
More woful — such as this small dungeon, where
I may breathe many years.
Mar. Alas! and this
Small dungeon is all that belongs to thee
Of this wide realm of which thy sire is prince.
Jac. Fos. That thought would scarcely aid me to endure it.
My doom is common, many are in dungeons,
But none like mine, so near their father’s palace;
But then my heart is sometimes high, and hope
Will stream along those moted rays of light
Peopled with dusty atoms which afford
Our only day; for, save the gaoler’s torch,
And a strange firefly, which was quickly caught
Last night in yon enormous spider’s net,
I ne’er saw aught here like a ray. Alas!

I know if mind may bear us up, or no,
For I have such, and shown it before men;
It sinks in solitude: my soul is social.
Mar. I will be with thee.
Jac. Fos. Ah! if it were so!
But *that* they never granted — nor will grant,
And I shall be alone; no men — no books,
Those lying likenesses of lying men.
I ask'd for even those outlines of their kind,
Which they term annals, history, what you will,
Which men bequeath as portraits, and they were
Refused me, — so these walls have been my study,
More faithful pictures of Venetian story,
With all their blank, or dismal stains, than is
The Hall not far from hence, which bears on high
Hundreds of doges, and their deeds and dates.
Mar. I come to tell thee the result of their
Last council on thy doom.
Jac. Fos. I know it — look!

[*He points to his limbs, as referring to the question which he had undergone.*

Mar. No — no — no more of that: even they relent
From that atrocity.
Jac. Fos. What then?
Mar. That you
Return to Candia.
Jac. Fos. Then my last hope 's gone.
I could endure my dungeon, for 't was Venice;
I could support the torture, there was something
In my native air that buoy'd my spirits up
Like a ship on the ocean toss'd by storms,
But proudly still bestriding the high waves
And holding on its course; but *there*, afar,
In that accursèd isle of slaves, and captives,
And unbelievers, like a stranded wreck,
My very soul seem'd mouldering in my bosom,
And piecemeal I shall perish, if remanded.
Mar. And *here?*
Jac. Fos. At once — by better means, as briefer.
What! would they even deny me my sire's sepulchre,
As well as home and heritage?
Mar. My husband!
I have sued to accompany thee hence,
And not so hopelessly. This love of thine
For an ungrateful and tyrannic soil
Is passion, and not patriotism; for me,
So I could see thee with a quiet aspect
And the sweet freedom of the earth and air,
I would not cavil about climes or regions.
This crowd of palaces and prisons is not
A paradise; its first inhabitants
Were wretched exiles.
Jac. Fos. Well I know *how* wretched!
Mar. And yet you see how, from their banishment
Before the Tartar into these salt isles,
Their antique energy of mind, all that
Remain'd of Rome for their inheritance,
Created by degrees an ocean-Rome;
And shall an evil, which so often leads
To good, depress thee thus?
Jac. Fos. Had I gone forth
From my own land, like the old patriarchs seeking
Another region with their flocks and herds;
Had I been cast out like the Jews from Zion,
Or like our fathers, driven by Attila
From fertile Italy, to barren islets,
I would have given some tears to my late country
And many thoughts; but afterwards address'd
Myself, with those about me, to create
A new home and fresh state: perhaps I could
Have borne this — though I know not.
Mar. Wherefore not?
It was the lot of millions, and must be
The fate of myriads more.
Jac. Fos. Ay — we but hear
Of the survivors' toil in their new lands,
Their numbers and success; but who can number
The hearts which broke in silence of that parting,
Or after their departure; of that malady
Which calls up green and native fields to view
From the rough deep, with such identity
To the poor exile's fever'd eye, that he
Can scarcely be restrain'd from treading them?
That melody, which out of tones and tunes
Collects such pasture for the longing sorrow
Of the sad mountaineer, when far away
From his snow canopy of cliffs and clouds,
That he feeds on the sweet, but poisonous thought,

And dies. You call this *weakness!* It is strength,
I say, — the parent of all honest feeling.
He who loves not his country can love nothing.
Mar. Obey her, then: 't is she that puts thee forth.
Jac. Fos. Ay, there it is; 't is like a mother's curse
Upon my soul — the mark is set upon me.
The exiles you speak of went forth by nations,
Their hands upheld each other by the way,
Their tents were pitch'd together — I 'm alone.
Mar. You shall be so no more, I will go with thee.
Jac. Fos. My best Marina! — and our children?
Mar. They,
I fear, by the prevention of the state's
Abhorrent policy (which holds all ties
As threads which may be broken at her pleasure),
Will not be suffer'd to proceed with us.
Jac. Fos. And canst thou leave them?
Mar. Yes, with many a pang,
But — I *can* leave them, children as they are,
To teach you to be less a child. From this
Learn you to sway your feelings, when exacted
By duties paramount; and 't is our first
On earth to bear.
Jac. Fos. Have I not borne?
Mar. Too much
From tyrannous injustice, and enough
To teach you not to shrink now from a lot,
Which, as compared with what you have undergone
Of late, is mercy.
Jac. Fos. Ah! you never yet
Were far away from Venice, never saw
Her beautiful towers in the receding distance,
While every furrow of the vessel's track
Seem'd ploughing deep into your heart; you never
Saw day go down upon your native spires
So calmly with its gold and crimson glory,
And after dreaming a disturbèd vision
Of them and theirs, awoke and found them not.
Mar. I will divide this with you. Let us think
Of our departure from this much-loved city
(Since you must *love* it, as it seems), and this
Chamber of state, her gratitude allots you.
Our children will be cared for by the Doge,
And by my uncles: we must sail ere night.
Jac. Fos. That 's sudden. Shall I not behold my father?
Mar. You will.
Jac. Fos. Where?
Mar. Here, or in the ducal chamber —
He said not which. I would that you could bear
Your exile as he bears it.
Jac. Fos. Blame him not.
I sometimes murmur for a moment; but
He could not now act otherwise. A show
Of feeling or compassion on his part
Would have but drawn upon his agèd head
Suspicion from 'the Ten,' and upon mine
Accumulated ills.
Mar. Accumulated!
What pangs are those they have spared you?
Jac. Fos. That of leaving
Venice without beholding him or you,
Which might have been forbidden now, as 't was
Upon my former exile.
Mar. That is true,
And thus far I am also the state's debtor,
And shall be more so when I see us both
Floating on the free waves — away — away —
Be it to the earth's end, from this abhorr'd,
Unjust, and —
Jac. Fos. Curse it not. If I am silent,
Who dares accuse my country?
Mar. Men and angels!
The blood of myriads reeking up to heaven,
The groans of slaves in chains, and men in dungeons,
Mothers, and wives, and sons, and sires, and subjects,
Held in the bondage of ten bald-heads; and
Though last, not least, *thy silence. Couldst thou* say
Aught in its favour, who would praise like *thee?*
Jac. Fos. Let us address us then, since so it must be,
To our departure. Who comes here?

Enter Loredano, *attended by Familiars.*
Lor. (*to the Familiars*). Retire,
But leave the torch. [*Exeunt the two Familiars.*
Jac. Fos. Most welcome, noble signor.
I did not deem this poor place could have drawn
Such presence hither.
Lor. 'T is not the first time
I have visited these places.
Mar. Nor would be
The last, were all men's merits well rewarded.
Came you here to insult us, or remain
As spy upon us, or as hostage for us?
Lor. Neither are of my office, noble lady!
I am sent hither to your husband, to
Announce 'the Ten's' decree.
Mar. That tenderness
Has been anticipated: it is known.
Lor. As how?
Mar. I have inform'd him, not so gently
Doubtless, as your nice feelings would prescribe,
The indulgence of your colleagues: but he knew it.
If you come for our thanks, take them, and hence!
The dungeon gloom is deep enough without you,
And full of reptiles, not less loathsome, though
Their sting is honester.
Jac. Fos. I pray you, calm you:
What can avail such words?
Mar. To let him know
That he is known.
Lor. Let the fair dame preserve
Her sex's privilege.
Mar. I have some sons, sir,
Will one day thank you better.
Lor. You do well
To nurse them wisely. Foscari — you know
Your sentence, then?
Jac. Fos. Return to Candia?
Lor. True —
For life.
Jac. Fos. Not long.
Lor. I said — for *life*.
Jac. Fos. And I
Repeat — not long.
Lor. A year's imprisonment
In Canea — afterwards the freedom of
The whole isle.
Jac. Fos. Both the same to me: the after
Freedom as is the first imprisonment.
Is 't true my wife accompanies me?
Lor. Yes,
If she so wills it.
Mar. Who obtain'd that justice?
Lor. One who wars not with women.
Mar. But oppresses
Men: howsoever let him have *my* thanks
For the only boon I would have ask'd or taken
From him or such as he is.
Lor. He receives them
As they are offer'd.
Mar. May they thrive with him
So much! — no more.
Jac. Fos. Is this, sir, your whole mission?
Because we have brief time for preparation,
And you perceive your presence doth disquiet
This lady, of a house noble as yours.
Mar. Nobler!
Lor. How nobler?
Mar. As more generous!
We say the 'generous steed' to express the purity
Of his high blood. Thus much I 've learnt, although
Venetian (who see few steeds save of bronze),
From those Venetians who have skirr'd the coasts
Of Egypt and her neighbour Araby:
And why not say as soon the '*generous man?*'
If race be aught, it is in qualities
More than in years; and mine, which is as old
As yours, is better in its product, nay —
Look not so stern — but get you back, and pore
Upon your genealogic tree's most green
Of leaves and most mature of fruits, and there
Blush to find ancestors, who would have blush'd
For such a son — thou cold inveterate hater!
Jac. Fos. Again, Marina!
Mar. Again! *still*, Marina.
See you not, he comes here to glut his hate
With a last look upon our misery?
Let him partake it!

Jac. Fos. That were difficult.
Mar. Nothing more easy. He partakes it now —
Ay, he may veil beneath a marble brow
And sneering lip the pang, but he partakes it.
A few brief words of truth shame the devil's servants
No less than master: I have probed his soul
A moment, as the eternal fire ere long
Will reach it always. See how he shrinks from me!
With death, and chains, and exile in his hand
To scatter o'er his kind as he thinks fit:
They are his weapons, not his armour, for
I have pierced him to the core of his cold heart.
I care not for his frowns! We can but die,
And he but live, for him the very worst
Of destinies: each day secures him more
His tempter's.
Jac. Fos. This is mere insanity.
Mar. It may be so: and *who* hath made us *mad?*
Lor. Let her go on; it irks not me.
Mar. That's false!
You came here to enjoy a heartless triumph
Of cold looks upon manifold griefs! You came
To be sued to in vain, to mark our tears,
And hoard our groans, to gaze upon the wreck
Which you have made a prince's son — my husband;
In short, to trample on the fallen — an office
The hangman shrinks from, as all men from him!
How have you sped? We are wretched, signor, as
Your plots could make, and vengeance could desire us,
And how *feel you?*
Lor. As rocks.
Mar. By thunder blasted:
They feel not, but no less are shiver'd. Come,
Foscari; now let us go, and leave this felon,
The sole fit habitant of such a cell,
Which he has peopled often, but ne'er fitly
Till he himself shall brood in it alone.

Enter the DOGE.

Jac. Fos. My father!
Doge (*embracing him*). Jacopo! my son, my son!
Jac. Fos. My father still! How long it is since I
Have heard thee name my name — *our* name!
Doge. My boy!
Couldst thou but know —
Jac. Fos. I rarely, sir, have murmur'd.
Doge. I feel too much thou hast not.
Mar. Doge, look there!
[*She points to* LOREDANO.
Doge. I see the man — what mean'st thou?
Mar. Caution!
Lor. Being
The virtue which this noble lady most
May practise, she doth well to recommend it.
Mar. Wretch! 'tis no virtue, but the policy
Of those who fain must deal perforce with vice:
As such I recommend it, as I would
To one whose foot was on an adder's path.
Doge. Daughter, it is superfluous; I have long
Known Loredano.
Lor. You may know him better.
Mar. Yes; *worse* he could not.
Jac. Fos. Father, let not these
Our parting hours be lost in listening to
Reproaches, which boot nothing. Is it — is it,
Indeed, our last of meetings?
Doge. You behold
These white hairs!
Jac. Fos. And I feel, besides, that mine
Will never be so white. Embrace me, father!
I loved you ever — never more than now.
Look to my children — to your last child's children:
Let them be all to you which he was once,
And never be to you what I am now.
May I not see *them* also?
Mar. No — not *here.*
Jac. Fos. They might behold their parent anywhere.
Mar. I would that they beheld their father in
A place which would not mingle fear with love,
To freeze their young blood in its natural current.
They have fed well, slept soft, and knew not that

Their sire was a mere hunted outlaw. Well,
I know his fate may one day be their heritage,
But let it only be their *heritage*,
And not their present fee. Their senses, though
Alive to love, are yet awake to terror;
And these vile damps, too, and yon *thick green* wave
Which floats above the place where we now stand —
A cell so far below the water's level,
Sending its pestilence through every crevice,
Might strike them: *this is not their* atmosphere,
However you — and you — and most of all,
As worthiest, *you*, sir, noble Loredano!
May breathe it without prejudice.
Jac. Fos. I have not
Reflected upon this, but acquiesce.
I shall depart, then, without meeting them?
Doge. Not so: they shall await you in my chamber.
Jac. Fos. And must I leave them — *all?*
Lor. You must.
Jac. Fos. Not one?
Lor. They are the state's.
Mar. I thought they had been mine.
Lor. They are, in all maternal things.
Mar. That is,
In all things painful. If they 're sick, they will
Be left to me to tend them; should they die,
To me to bury and to mourn; but if
They live, they 'll make you soldiers, senators,
Slaves, exiles — what *you* will; or if they are
Females with portions, brides and *bribes* for nobles!
Behold the state's care for its sons and mothers!
Lor. The hour approaches, and the wind is fair.
Jac. Fos. How know you that here, where the genial wind
Ne'er blows in all its blustering freedom?
Lor. 'T was so
When I came here. The galley floats within
A bow-shot of the 'Riva di Schiavoni.'
Jac. Fos. Father! I pray you to precede me, and
Prepare my children to behold their father.
Doge. Be firm, my son!
Jac. Fos. I will do my endeavour.
Mar. Farewell! at least to this detested dungeon,
And him to whose good offices you owe
In part your past imprisonment.
Lor. And present
Liberation.
Doge. He speaks truth.
Jac. Fos. No doubt! but 't is
Exchange of chains for heavier chains I owe him.
He knows this, or he had not sought to change them.
But I reproach not.
Lor. The time narrows, signor.
Jac. Fos. Alas! I little thought so lingeringly
To leave abodes like this: but when I feel
That every step I take, even from this cell,
Is one away from Venice, I look back
Even on these dull damp walls, and —
Doge. Boy! no tears.
Mar. Let them flow on: he wept not on the rack
To shame him, and they cannot shame him now.
They will relieve his heart — that too kind heart —
And I will find an hour to wipe away
Those tears, or add my own. I could weep now,
But would not gratify yon wretch so far.
Let us proceed. Doge, lead the way.
Lor. (*to the Familiar*). The torch, there!
Mar. Yes, light us on, as to a funeral pyre,
With Loredano mourning like an heir.
Doge. My son, you are feeble; take this hand.
Jac. Fos. Alas!
Must youth support itself on age, and I
Who ought to be the prop of yours?
Lor. Take mine.
Mar. Touch it not, Foscari; 't will sting you. Signor,
Stand off! be sure that if a grasp of yours
Would raise us from the gulf wherein we are plunged,
No hand of ours would stretch itself to meet it.
Come, Foscari, take the hand the altar gave you;
It could not save, but will support you ever.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV

Scene I

A Hall in the Ducal Palace.

Enter Loredano *and* Barbarigo.

Bar. And have you confidence in such a project?
Lor. I have.
Bar. 'T is hard upon his years.
Lor. Say rather
Kind to relieve him from the cares of state.
Bar. 'T will break his heart.
Lor. Age has no heart to break.
He has seen his son's half broken, and, except
A start of feeling in his dungeon, never
Swerved.
Bar. In his countenance, I grant you, never;
But I have seen him sometimes in a calm
So desolate, that the most clamorous grief
Had nought to envy him within. Where is he?
Lor. In his own portion of the palace, with
His son and the whole race of Foscaris.
Bar. Bidding farewell?
Lor. A last. As soon he shall
Bid to his dukedom.
Bar. When embarks the son?
Lor. Forthwith — when this long leave is taken. 'T is
Time to admonish them again.
Bar. Forbear;
Retrench not from their moments.
Lor. Not I, now
We have higher business for our own. This day
Shall be the last of the old Doge's reign,
As the first of his son's last banishment,
And that is vengeance.
Bar. In my mind, too deep.
Lor. 'T is moderate — not even life for life, the rule
Denounced of retribution from all time;
They owe me still my father's and my uncle's.
Bar. Did not the Doge deny this strongly?
Lor. Doubtless.
Bar. And did not this shake your suspicion?
Lor. No.
Bar. But if this deposition should take place
By our united influence in the Council,
It must be done with all the deference
Due to his years, his station, and his deeds.
Lor. As much of ceremony as you will,
So that the thing be done. You may, for aught
I care, depute the Council on their knees
(Like Barbarossa to the Pope), to beg him
To have the courtesy to abdicate.
Bar. What, if he will not?
Lor. We'll elect another,
And make him null.
Bar. But will the laws uphold us?
Lor. What laws? — 'The Ten' are laws; and if they were not,
I will be legislator in this business.
Bar. At your own peril?
Lor. There is none, I tell you,
Our powers are such.
Bar. But he has twice already
Solicited permission to retire,
And twice it was refused.
Lor. The better reason
To grant it the third time.
Bar. Unask'd?
Lor. It shows
The impression of his former instances:
If they were from his heart, he may be thankful:
If not, 't will punish his hypocrisy.
Come, they are met by this time; let us join them,
And be *thou* fix'd in purpose for this once.
I have prepared such arguments as will not
Fail to move them, and to remove him. Since
Their thoughts, their objects, have been sounded, do not
You, with your wonted scruples, teach us pause,
And all will prosper.
Bar. Could I but be certain
This is no prelude to such persecution
Of the sire as has fallen upon the son,
I would support you.
Lor. He is safe, I tell you;
His fourscore years and five may linger on
As long as he can drag them: 't is his throne
Alone is aim'd at.
Bar. But discarded princes
Are seldom long of life.
Lor. And men of eighty
More seldom still.
Bar. And why not wait these few years?

Lor. Because we have waited long enough, and he
Lived longer than enough. Hence! in to council!
[*Exeunt* LOREDANO *and* BARBARIGO.

Enter MEMMO *and a Senator.*

Sen. A summons to 'the Ten!' Why so?
Mem. 'The Ten'
Alone can answer; they are rarely wont
To let their thoughts anticipate their purpose
By previous proclamation. We are summon'd —
That is enough.
Sen. For them, but not for us;
I would know why.
Mem. You will know why anon,
If you obey; and if not, you no less
Will know why you should have obey'd.
Sen. I mean not
To oppose them, *but* —
Mem. In Venice '*but*''s a traitor.
But me no '*buts*,' unless you would pass o'er
The Bridge which few repass.
Sen. I am silent.
Mem. Why
Thus hesitate? 'The Ten' have call'd in aid
Of their deliberation five and twenty
Patricians of the senate — you are one,
And I another; and it seems to me
Both honour'd by the choice or chance which leads us
To mingle with a body so august.
Sen. Most true. I say no more.
Mem. As we hope, signor,
And all may honestly (that is, all those
Of noble blood may), one day hope to be
Decemvir, it is surely for the senate's
Chosen delegates, a school of wisdom, to
Be thus admitted, though as novices,
To view the mysteries.
Sen. Let us view them; they,
No doubt, are worth it.
Mem. Being worth our lives
If we divulge them, doubtless they are worth
Something, at least to you or me.
Sen. I sought not
A place within the sanctuary; but being
Chosen, however reluctantly so chosen,
I shall fulfil my office.
Mem. Let us not
Be latest in obeying 'the Ten's' summons.
Sen. All are not met, but I am of your thought
So far — let 's in.
Mem. The earliest are most welcome
In earnest councils — we will not be least so. [*Exeunt.*

Enter the DOGE, JACOPO FOSCARI, *and* MARINA.

Jac. Fos. Ah, father! though I must and will depart,
Yet — yet — I pray you to obtain for me
That I once more return unto my home,
Howe'er remote the period. Let there be
A point of time, as beacon to my heart,
With any penalty annex'd they please,
But let me still return.
Doge. Son Jacopo,
Go and obey our country's will: 't is not
For us to look beyond.
Jac. Fos. But still I must
Look back. I pray you think of me.
Doge. Alas!
You ever were my dearest offspring, when
They were more numerous, nor can be less so
Now you are last; but did the state demand
The exile of the disinterrèd ashes
Of your three goodly brothers, now in earth,
And their desponding shades came flitting round
To impede the act, I must no less obey
A duty, paramount to every duty.
Mar. My husband! let us on; this but prolongs
Our sorrow.
Jac. Fos. But we are not summon'd yet;
The galley's sails are not unfurl'd: — who knows?
The wind may change.
Mar. And if it do, it will not
Change *their* hearts, or your lot: the galley's oars
Will quickly clear the harbour.
Jac. Fos. O ye elements!
Where are your storms?
Mar. In human breasts. Alas!
Will nothing calm you?
Jac. Fos. Never yet did mariner
Put up to patron saint such prayers for prosperous
And pleasant breezes, as I call upon you,
Ye tutelar saints of my own city! which
Ye love not with more holy love than I,

To lash up from the deep the Adrian waves,
And waken Auster, sovereign of the tempest!
Till the sea dash me back on my own shore
A broken corse upon the barren Lido,
Where I may mingle with the sands which skirt
The land I love, and never shall see more!
Mar. And wish you this with *me* beside you?
Jac. Fos. No —
No — not for thee, too good, too kind! May'st thou
Live long to be a mother to those children
Thy fond fidelity for a time deprives
Of such support! But for myself alone,
May all the winds of heaven howl down the Gulf,
And tear the vessel, till the mariners,
Appall'd, turn their despairing eyes on me,
As the Phenicians did on Jonah, then
Cast me out from amongst them as an offering
To appease the waves. The billow which destroys me
Will be more merciful than man, and bear me,
Dead, but *still bear* me to a native grave,
From fishers' hands upon the desolate strand,
Which, of its thousand wrecks, hath ne'er received
One lacerated like the heart which then
Will be — But wherefore breaks it not? Why live I?
Mar. To man thyself, I trust, with time, to master
Such useless passion. Until now thou wert
A sufferer, but not a loud one: why,
What is this to the things thou hast borne in silence —
Imprisonment and actual torture?
Jac. Fos. Double,
Triple, and tenfold torture! But you are right,
It must be borne. Father, your blessing!
Doge. Would
It could avail thee! but no less thou hast it.
Jac. Fos. Forgive —
Doge. What?
Jac. Fos. My poor mother, for my birth,
And me for having lived, and you yourself
(As I forgive you), for the gift of life,
Which you bestow'd upon me as my sire.
Mar. What hast thou done?
Jac. Fos. Nothing. I cannot charge
My memory with much save sorrow: but
I have been so beyond the common lot
Chasten'd and visited, I needs must think
That I was wicked. If it be so, may
What I have undergone here keep me from
A like hereafter!
Mar. Fear not: *that's* reserved
For your oppressors.
Jac. Fos. Let me hope not.
Mar. Hope not?
Jac. Fos. I cannot wish them *all* they have inflicted.
Mar. *All!* the consummate fiends! A thousand fold
May the worm which ne'er dieth feed upon them!
Jac. Fos. They may repent.
Mar. And if they do, Heaven will not
Accept the tardy penitence of demons.

Enter an Officer and Guards.

Offi. Signor! the boat is at the shore — the wind
Is rising — we are ready to attend you.
Jac. Fos. And I to be attended. Once more, father,
Your hand!
Doge. Take it. Alas, how thine own trembles!
Jac. Fos. No — you mistake; 't is yours that shakes, my father.
Farewell!
Doge. Farewell! Is there aught else?
Jac. Fos. No — nothing.
[*To the Officer.*
Lend me your arm, good signor.
Offi. You turn pale —
Let me support you — paler — ho! some aid there!
Some water!
Mar. Ah, he is dying!
Jac. Fos. Now, I'm ready —
My eyes swim strangely — where's the door?
Mar. Away!
Let me support him — my best love! Oh, God!
How faintly beats this heart — this pulse!
Jac. Fos. The light!
Is it the light? — I am faint.
[*Officer presents him with water.*
Offi. He will be better
Perhaps, in the air.

Jac. Fos. I doubt not. Father — wife —
Your hands!
Mar. There 's death in that damp clammy grasp.
Oh, God! My Foscari, how fare you?
Jac. Fos. Well!
[*He dies.*
Offi. He 's gone!
Doge. He 's free!
Mar. No — no, he is not dead;
There must be life yet in that heart — he could not
Thus leave me.
Doge. Daughter!
Mar. Hold thy peace, old man!
I am no daughter now — thou hast no son.
Oh, Foscari!
Offi. We must remove the body.
Doge. Touch it not, dungeon miscreants! your base office
Ends with his life, and goes not beyond murder,
Even by your murderous laws. Leave his remains
To those who know to honour them.
Offi. I must
Inform the signory, and learn their pleasure.
Doge. Inform the signory from *me*, the Doge,
They have no further power upon those ashes:
While he lived, he was theirs, as fits a subject;
Now he is *mine* — my broken-hearted boy!
[*Exit Officer.*
Mar. And I must live!
Doge. Your children live, Marina.
Mar. My children! true — they live, and I must live
To bring them up to serve the state, and die
As died their father. Oh, what best of blessings
Were barrenness in Venice! Would my mother
Had been so!
Doge. My unhappy children!
Mar. What!
You feel it then at last — *you!* Where is now
The stoic of the state?
Doge (*throwing himself down by the body*). *Here!*
Mar. Ay, weep on!
I thought you had no tears — you hoarded them
Until they are useless; but weep on! he never
Shall weep more — never, never more.

Enter Loredano *and* Barbarigo.

Lor. What 's here?
Mar. Ah! the devil come to insult the dead! Avaunt!
Incarnate Lucifer! 't is holy ground.
A martyr's ashes now lie there, which make it
A shrine. Get thee back to thy place of torment!
Bar. Lady, we knew not of this sad event,
But pass'd here merely on our path from council.
Mar. Pass on.
Lor. We sought the Doge.
Mar. (*pointing to the Doge, who is still on the ground by his son's body*). He 's busy, look,
About the business *you* provided for him.
Are ye content?
Bar. We will not interrupt
A parent's sorrows.
Mar. No, ye only make them,
Then leave them.
Doge (*rising*). Sirs, I am ready.
Bar. No — not now.
Lor. Yet 't was important.
Doge. If 't was so, I can
Only repeat — I am ready.
Bar. It shall not be
Just now, though Venice totter'd o'er the deep
Like a frail vessel. I respect your griefs.
Doge. I thank you. If the tidings which you bring
Are evil, you may say them; nothing further
Can touch me more than him thou look'st on there.
If they be good, say on; you need not *fear*
That they can *comfort* me.
Bar. I would they could!
Doge. I spoke not to *you*, but to Loredano.
He understands me.
Mar. Ah! I thought it would be so.
Doge. What mean you?
Mar. Lo! there is the blood beginning
To flow through the dead lips of Foscari —

The body bleeds in the presence of the assassin. [*To* LOREDANO.
Thou cowardly murderer by law, behold
How death itself bears witness to thy deeds!
Doge. My child! this is a phantasy of grief.
Bear hence the body. [*To his attendants.*] — Signors, if it please you,
Within an hour I'll hear you.

[*Exeunt* DOGE, MARINA, *and attendants with the body. Manent* LOREDANO *and* BARBARIGO.

Bar. He must not
Be troubled now.
Lor. He said himself that nought
Could give him trouble farther.
Bar. These are words;
But grief is lonely, and the breaking in
Upon it barbarous.
Lor. Sorrow preys upon
Its solitude, and nothing more diverts it
From its sad visions of the other world,
Than calling it at moments back to this.
The busy have no time for tears.
Bar. And therefore
You would deprive this old man of all business?
Lor. The thing's decreed. The Giunta and 'the Ten'
Have made it law — who shall oppose that law?
Bar. Humanity!
Lor. Because his son is dead?
Bar. And yet unburied.
Lor. Had we known this when
The act was passing, it might have suspended
Its passage, but impedes it not — once past.
Bar. I'll not consent.
Lor. You have consented to
All that's essential — leave the rest to me.
Bar. Why press this abdication now?
Lor. The feelings
Of private passion may not interrupt
The public benefit; and what the state
Decides to-day must not give way before
To-morrow for a natural accident.
Bar. You have a son.
Lor. I *have* — and *had* a father.
Bar. Still so inexorable?
Lor. Still.
Bar. But let him
Inter his son before we press upon him
This edict.
Lor. Let him call up into life
My sire and uncle — I consent. Men may,
Even aged men, be, or appear to be,
Sires of a hundred sons, but cannot kindle
An atom of their ancestors from earth.
The victims are not equal: he has seen
His sons expire by natural deaths, and I
My sires by violent and mysterious maladies.
I used no poison, bribed no subtle master
Of the destructive art of healing, to
Shorten the path to the eternal cure.
His sons — and he had four — are dead, without
My dabbling in vile drugs.
Bar. And art thou sure
He dealt in such?
Lor. Most sure.
Bar. And yet he seems
All openness.
Lor. And so he seem'd not long
Ago to Carmagnuola.
Bar. The attainted
And foreign traitor?
Lor. Even so: when *he*,
After the very night in which 'the Ten'
(Join'd with the Doge) decided his destruction,
Met the great Duke at daybreak with a jest,
Demanding whether he should augur him
'The good day or good night?' his Dogeship answer'd,
'That he in truth had pass'd a night of vigil,
In which (he added with a gracious smile)
There often has been question about you.'
'T was true; the question was the death resolved
Of Carmagnuola, eight months ere he died;
And the old Doge, who knew him doom'd, smiled on him
With deadly cozenage, eight long months beforehand —
Eight months of such hypocrisy as is
Learnt but in eighty years. Brave Carmagnuola
Is dead; so is young Foscari and his brethren —
I never *smiled* on *them*.
Bar. Was Carmagnuola
Your friend?
Lor. He was the safeguard of the city.
In early life its foe, but, in his manhood,
Its saviour first, then victim.
Bar. Ah! that seems
The penalty of saving cities. He
Whom we now act against not only saved
Our own, but added others to her sway.

Lor. The Romans (and we ape them) gave a crown
To him who took a city; and they gave
A crown to him who saved a citizen
In battle: the rewards are equal. Now,
If we should measure forth the cities taken
By the Doge Foscari, with citizens
Destroy'd by him, or *through* him, the account
Were fearfully against him, although narrow'd
To private havoc, such as between him
And my dead father.
Bar. Are you then thus fix'd?
Lor. Why, what should change me?
Bar. That which changes me:
But you, I know, are marble to retain
A feud. But when all is accomplish'd, when
The old man is deposed, his name degraded,
His sons all dead, his family depress'd,
And you and yours triumphant, shall you sleep?
Lor. More soundly.
Bar. That 's an error, and you 'll find it
Ere you sleep with your fathers.
Lor. They sleep not
In their accelerated graves, nor will
Till Foscari fills his. Each night I see them
Stalk frowning round my couch, and, pointing towards
The ducal palace, marshal me to vengeance.
Bar. Fancy's distemperature! There is no passion
More spectral or fantastical than Hate;
Not even its opposite, Love, so peoples air
With phantoms, as this madness of the heart.

Enter an Officer.

Lor. Where go you, sirrah?
Offi. By the ducal order
To forward the preparatory rites
For the late Foscari's interment.
Bar. Their
Vault has been often open'd of late years.
Lor. 'T will be full soon, and may be closed for ever.
Offi. May I pass on?
Lor. You may.
Bar. How bears the Doge
This last calamity?
Offi. With desperate firmness.
In presence of another he says little,
But I perceive his lips move now and then;
And once or twice I heard him, from the adjoining
Apartment, mutter forth the words — 'My son!'
Scarce audibly. I must proceed. [*Exit Officer.*
Bar. This stroke
Will move all Venice in his favour.
Lor. Right!
We must be speedy: let us call together
The delegates appointed to convey
The council's resolution.
Bar. I protest
Against it at this moment.
Lor. As you please —
I'll take their voices on it ne'ertheless,
And see whose most may sway them, yours or mine.
[*Exeunt* BARBARIGO *and* LOREDANO.

ACT V

SCENE I

The DOGE'S *Apartment.*

The DOGE *and Attendants.*

Att. My lord, the deputation is in waiting;
But add, that if another hour would better
Accord with your will, they will make it theirs.
Doge. To me all hours are alike. Let them approach. [*Exit Attendant.*
An Officer. Prince! I have done your bidding.
Doge. What command?
Offi. A melancholy one — to call the attendance
Of —
Doge. True — true — true: I crave your pardon. I
Begin to fail in apprehension, and
Wax very old — old almost as my years.
Till now I fought them off, but they begin
To overtake me.

Enter the Deputation, consisting of Six of the Signory and the Chief of the Ten.

Noble men, your pleasure?
Chief of the Ten. In the first place, the Council doth condole
With the Doge on his late and private grief.
Doge. No more — no more of that.
Chief of the Ten. Will not the Duke
Accept the homage of respect?

Doge. I do
Accept it as 't is given — proceed.
Chief of the Ten. 'The Ten,'
With a selected giunta from the senate
Of twenty-five of the best born patricians,
Having deliberated on the state
Of the republic, and the o'erwhelming cares
Which, at this moment, doubly must oppress
Your years, so long devoted to your country,
Have judged it fitting, with all reverence,
Now to solicit from your wisdom (which
Upon reflection must accord in this)
The resignation of the ducal ring,
Which you have worn so long and venerably.
And to prove that they are not ungrateful, nor
Cold to your years and services, they add
An appanage of twenty hundred golden
Ducats, to make retirement not less splendid
Than should become a sovereign's retreat.
Doge. Did I hear rightly?
Chief of the Ten. Need I say again?
Doge. No. — Have you done?
Chief of the Ten. I have spoken. Twenty-four
Hours are accorded you to give an answer.
Doge. I shall not need so many seconds.
Chief of the Ten. We
Will now retire.
Doge. Stay! Four and twenty hours
Will alter nothing which I have to say.
Chief of the Ten. Speak!
Doge. When I twice before reiterated
My wish to abdicate, it was refused me:
And not alone refused, but ye exacted
An oath from me that I would never more
Renew this instance. I have sworn to die
In full exertion of the functions, which
My country call'd me here to exercise,
According to my honour and my conscience —
I cannot break *my* oath.
Chief of the Ten. Reduce us not
To the alternative of a decree,
Instead of your compliance.
Doge. Providence
Prolongs my days to prove and chasten me;
But ye have no right to reproach my length
Of days, since every hour has been the country's.
I am ready to lay down my life for her,
As I have laid down dearer things than life:
But for my dignity — I hold it of
The *whole* republic; when the *general* will
Is manifest, then you shall all be answer'd.
Chief of the Ten. We grieve for such an answer; but it cannot
Avail you aught.
Doge. I can submit to all things,
But nothing will advance; no, not a moment.
What you decree — decree.
Chief of the Ten. With this, then, must we
Return to those who sent us?
Doge. You have heard me.
Chief of the Ten. With all due reverence we retire. [*Exeunt the Deputation, etc.*

Enter an Attendant.

Att. My lord,
The noble dame Marina craves an audience.
Doge. My time is hers.

Enter MARINA.

Mar. My lord, if I intrude —
Perhaps you fain would be alone?
Doge. Alone!
Alone, come all the world around me, I
Am now and evermore. But we will bear it.
Mar. We will; and for the sake of those who are,
Endeavour — Oh, my husband!
Doge. Give it way;
I cannot comfort thee.
Mar. He might have lived,
So form'd for gentle privacy of life,
So loving, so beloved; the native of
Another land, and who so bless'd and blessing
As my poor Foscari? Nothing was wanting
Unto his happiness and mine save not
To be Venetian.
Doge. Or a prince's son.
Mar. Yes; all things which conduce to other men's
Imperfect happiness or high ambition,
By some strange destiny, to him proved deadly.
The country and the people whom he loved,
The prince of whom he was the elder born,
And —

Doge. Soon may be a prince no longer.
Mar. How?
Doge. They have taken my son from me, and now aim
At my too long worn diadem and ring.
Let them resume the gewgaws!
Mar. Oh, the tyrants!
In such an hour too!
Doge. 'T is the fittest time;
An hour ago I should have felt it.
Mar. And
Will you not now resent it? — Oh, for vengeance!
But he, who, had he been enough protected,
Might have repaid protection in this moment,
Cannot assist his father.
Doge. Nor should do so
Against his country, had he a thousand lives
Instead of that —
Mar. They tortured from him. This
May be pure patriotism. I am a woman:
To me my husband and my children were
Country and home. I loved *him* — how I loved him!
I have seen him pass through such an ordeal as
The old martyrs would have shrunk from: he is gone,
And I, who would have given my blood for him,
Have nought to give but tears! But could I compass
The retribution of his wrongs! — Well, well;
I have sons, who shall be men.
Doge. Your grief distracts you.
Mar. I thought I could have borne it, when I saw him
Bow'd down by such oppression; yes, I thought
That I would rather look upon his corse
Than his prolong'd captivity; — I am punish'd
For that thought now. Would I were in his grave!
Doge. I must look on him once more.
Mar. Come with me!
Doge. Is he —
Mar. Our bridal bed is now his bier.
Doge. And he is in his shroud!
Mar. Come, come, old man!
[*Exeunt the* Doge *and* Marina.

Enter Barbarigo *and* Loredano.

Bar. (*to an Attendant*). Where is the Doge?
Att. This instant retired hence
With the illustrious lady his son's widow.
Lor. Where?
Att. To the chamber where the body lies.
Bar. Let us return, then.
Lor. You forget, you cannot.
We have the implicit order of the Giunta
To await their coming here, and join them in
Their office: they 'll be here soon after us.
Bar. And will they press their answer on the Doge?
Lor. 'T was his own wish that all should be done promptly.
He answer'd quickly, and must so be answer'd;
His dignity is look'd to, his estate
Cared for — what would he more?
Bar. Die in his robes:
He could not have lived long; but I have done
My best to save his honours, and opposed
This proposition to the last, though vainly.
Why would the general vote compel me hither?
Lor. 'T was fit that some one of such different thoughts
From ours should be a witness, lest false tongues
Should whisper that a harsh majority
Dreaded to have its acts beheld by others.
Bar. And not less, I must needs think, for the sake
Of humbling me for my vain opposition.
You are ingenious, Loredano, in
Your modes of vengeance, nay, poetical,
A very Ovid in the art of *hating*;
'T is thus (although a secondary object,
Yet hate has microscopic eyes) to you
I owe, by way of foil to the more zealous,
This undesired association in
Your Giunta's duties.
Lor. How! — *my* Giunta!
Bar. *Yours!*
They speak your language, watch your nod, approve
Your plans, and do your work. Are they not *yours?*
Lor. You talk unwarily. 'T were best they hear not
This from you.

Bar. Oh, they 'll hear as much one day
From louder tongues than mine: they have gone beyond
Even their exorbitance of power; and when
This happens in the most contemn'd and abject
States, stung humanity will rise to check it.
Lor. You talk but idly.
Bar. That remains for proof.
Here come our colleagues.

Enter the Deputation as before.

Chief of the Ten. Is the Duke aware
We seek his presence?
Att. He shall be inform'd.
[Exit Attendant.
Bar. The Duke is with his son.
Chief of the Ten. If it be so,
We will remit him till the rites are over.
Let us return. 'T is time enough to-morrow.
Lor. (aside to Bar.). Now the rich man's hell-fire upon your tongue,
Unquench'd, unquenchable! I 'll have it torn
From its vile babbling roots, till you shall utter
Nothing but sobs through blood, for this! — Sage signors,
I pray ye be not hasty. *[Aloud to the others.*
Bar. But be human!
Lor. See, the Duke comes!

Enter the Doge.

Doge. I have obey'd your summons.
Chief of the Ten. We come once more to urge our past request.
Doge. And I to answer.
Chief of the Ten. What?
Doge. My only answer.
You have heard it.
Chief of the Ten. Hear *you* then the last decree,
Definitive and absolute!
Doge. To the point —
To the point! I know of old the forms of office,
And gentle preludes to strong acts — Go on!
Chief of the Ten. You are no longer Doge; you are released
From your imperial oath as sovereign;
Your ducal robes must be put off; but for
Your services, the state allots the appanage
Already mention'd in our former congress.
Three days are left you to remove from hence,
Under the penalty to see confiscated
All your own private fortune.
Doge. That last clause,
I am proud to say, would not enrich the treasury.
Chief of the Ten. Your answer, Duke!
Lor. Your answer, Francis Foscari!
Doge. If I could have foreseen that my old age
Was prejudicial to the state, the chief
Of the republic never would have shown
Himself so far ungrateful, as to place
His own high dignity before his country;
But this *life* having been so many years
Not useless to that country, I would fain
Have consecrated my last moments to her.
But the decree being render'd, I obey.
Chief of the Ten. If you would have the three days named extended,
We willingly will lengthen them to eight,
As sign of our esteem.
Doge. Not eight hours, signor,
Nor even eight minutes — There 's the ducal ring, *[Taking off his ring and cap.*
And there the ducal diadem. And so
The Adriatic 's free to wed another.
Chief of the Ten. Yet go not forth so quickly.
Doge. I am old, sir,
And even to move but slowly must begin
To move betimes. Methinks I see amongst you
A face I know not — Senator! your name,
You, by your garb, Chief of the Forty!
Mem. Signor,
I am the son of Marco Memmo.
Doge. Ah!
Your father was my friend. — But *sons* and *fathers!* —
What, ho! my servants there!
Atten. My prince!
Doge. No prince —
There are the princes of the prince! *[Pointing to the Ten's Deputation.]* — Prepare
To part from hence upon the instant.
Chief of the Ten. Why
So rashly? 't will give scandal.
Doge. Answer that;
[To the Ten.
It is your province. — Sirs, bestir yourselves: *[To the Servants.*
There is one burthen which I beg you bear

With care, although 't is past all farther harm —
But I will look to that myself.
Bar. He means
The body of his son.
Doge. And call Marina,
My daughter!

Enter MARINA.

Doge. Get thee ready; we must mourn
Elsewhere.
Mar. And every where.
Doge. True; but in freedom,
Without these jealous spies upon the great.
Signors, you may depart: what would you more?
We are going: do you fear that we shall bear
The palace with us? Its *old* walls, ten times
As *old* as I am, and I 'm very old,
Have served you, so have I, and I and they
Could tell a tale; but I invoke them not
To fall upon you! else they would, as erst
The pillars of stone Dagon's temple on
The Israelite and his Philistine foes.
Such power I do believe there might exist
In such a curse as mine, provoked by such
As you; but I curse not. Adieu, good signors!
May the next duke be better than the present.
Lor. The *present* duke is Paschal Malipiero.
Doge. Not till I pass the threshold of these doors.
Lor. Saint Mark's great bell is soon about to toll
For his inauguration.
Doge. Earth and heaven!
Ye will reverberate this peal; and I
Live to hear this! — the first doge who e'er heard
Such sound for his successor! Happier he,
My attainted predecessor, stern Faliero —
This insult at the least was spared him.
Lor. What!
Do you regret a traitor?
Doge. No — I merely
Envy the dead.
Chief of the Ten. My lord, if you indeed
Are bent upon this rash abandonment
Of the state's palace, at the least retire
By the private staircase, which conducts you towards
The landing-place of the canal.
Doge. No. I
Will now descend the stairs by which I mounted
To sovereignty — the Giants' Stairs, on whose
Broad eminence I was invested duke.
My services have called me up those steps,
The malice of my foes will drive me down them.
There five and thirty years ago was I
Install'd, and traversed these same halls, from which
I never thought to be divorced except
A corse — a corse, it might be, fighting for them —
But not push'd hence by fellow-citizens.
But come; my son and I will go together —
He to his grave, and I to pray for mine.
Chief of the Ten. What! thus in public?
Doge. I was publicly
Elected, and so will I be deposed.
Marina! art thou willing?
Mar. Here 's my arm!
Doge. And here my *staff:* thus propp'd will I go forth.
Chief of the Ten. It must not be — the people will perceive it.
Doge. The people! — There 's no people, you well know it,
Else you dare not deal thus by them or me.
There is a *populace*, perhaps, whose looks
May shame you; but they dare not groan nor curse you,
Save with their hearts and eyes.
Chief of the Ten. You speak in passion
Else —
Doge. You have reason. I have spoken much
More than my wont: it is a foible which
Was not of mine, but more excuses you,
Inasmuch as it shows that I approach
A dotage which may justify this deed
Of yours, although the law does not, nor will.
Farewell, sirs!
Bar. You shall not depart without
An escort fitting past and present rank.
We will accompany, with due respect,
The Doge unto his private palace. Say!
My brethren, will we not?
Different voices. Ay! — Ay!
Doge. You shall not
Stir — in my train at least. I enter'd here
As sovereign — I go out as citizen

By the same portals, but as citizen.
All these vain ceremonies are base insults,
Which only ulcerate the heart the more,
Applying poisons there as antidotes.
Pomp is for princes — I am *none!* — That 's false,
I *am*, but only to these gates. — Ah!
Lor. Hark!
[*The great bell of St. Mark's tolls.*
Bar. The bell!
Chief of the Ten. St. Mark's, which tolls for the election
Of Malipiero.
Doge. Well I recognise
The sound! I heard it once, but once before,
And that is five and thirty years ago!
Even *then* I *was not young.*
Bar. Sit down, my lord!
You tremble.
Doge. 'T is the knell of my poor boy!
My heart aches bitterly.
Bar. I pray you sit.
Doge. No; my seat here has been a throne till now.
Marina, let us go.
Mar. Most readily.
Doge (*walks a few steps, then stops*). I feel athirst — will no one bring me here
A cup of water?
Bar. I —
Mar. And I —
Lor. And I —
[*The* Doge *takes a goblet from the hand of* Loredano.
Doge. I take *yours*, Loredano, from the hand
Most fit for such an hour as this.
Lor. Why so?
Doge. 'T is said that our Venetian crystal has
Such pure antipathy to poisons as
To burst, if aught of venom touches it.
You bore this goblet, and it is not broken.
Lor. Well, sir!
Doge. Then it is false, or you are true.
For my own part, I credit neither; 't is
An idle legend.
Mar. You talk wildly, and
Had better now be seated, nor as yet
Depart. Ah! now you look as look'd my husband!
Bar. He sinks! — support him! — quick — a chair — support him!
Doge. The bell tolls on! — let 's hence — my brain 's on fire!
Bar. I do beseech you, lean upon us!
Doge. No!
A sovereign should die standing. My poor boy!
Off with your arms! — *That bell!*
[*The* Doge *drops down and dies.*
Mar. My God! My God!
Bar. (*to Lor.*). Behold, your work 's completed!
Chief of the Ten. Is there then
No aid? Call in assistance!
Att. 'T is all over.
Chief of the Ten. If it be so, at least his obsequies
Shall be such as befits his name and nation,
His rank and his devotion to the duties
Of the realm, while his age permitted him
To do himself and them full justice. Brethren,
Say, shall it not be so?
Bar. He has not had
The misery to die a subject where
He reign'd: then let his funeral rites be princely.
Chief of the Ten. We are agreed, then?
All, except Lor., answer, Yes.
Chief of the Ten. Heaven's peace be with him!
Mar. Signors, your pardon: this is mockery.
Juggle no more with that poor remnant, which,
A moment since, while yet it had a soul
(A soul by whom you have increased your empire,
And made your power as proud as was his glory),
You banish'd from his palace and tore down
From his high place with such relentless coldness;
And now, when he can neither know these honours,
Nor would accept them if he could, you, signors,
Purpose with idle and superfluous pomp
To make a pageant over what you trampled.
A princely funeral will be your reproach,
And not his honour.
Chief of the Ten. Lady, we revoke not
Our purposes so readily.
Mar. I know it,
As far as touches torturing the living.

I thought the dead had been beyond even *you*,
Though (some, no doubt,) consign'd to powers which may
Resemble that you exercise on earth.
Leave him to me; you would have done so for
His dregs of life, which you have kindly shorten'd:
It is my last of duties, and may prove
A dreary comfort in my desolation.
Grief is fantastical, and loves the dead,
And the apparel of the grave.
Chief of the Ten. Do you
Pretend still to this office?
Mar. I do, signor.
Though his possessions have been all consumed
In the state's service, I have still my dowry,
Which shall be consecrated to his rites,
And those of — [*She stops with agitation.*
Chief of the Ten. Best retain it for your children.
Mar. Ay, they are fatherless! I thank you.
Chief of the Ten. We
Cannot comply with your request. His relics
Shall be exposed with wonted pomp, and follow'd
Unto their home by the new Doge, not clad
As *Doge*, but simply as a senator.
Mar. I have heard of murderers, who have interr'd
Their victims; but ne'er heard, until this hour,
Of so much splendour in hypocrisy
O'er those they slew. I 've heard of widows' tears —
Alas! I have shed some — always thanks to you!
I 've heard of *heirs* in sables — you have left none
To the deceased, so you would act the part
Of such. Well, sirs, your will be done! as one day,
I trust, Heaven's will be done too!
Chief of the Ten. Know you, lady,
To whom ye speak, and perils of such speech?
Mar. I know the former better than yourselves;
The latter — like yourselves; and can face both.
Wish you more funerals?
Bar. Heed not her rash words;
Her circumstances must excuse her bearing.
Chief of the Ten. We will not note them down.
Bar. (*turning to Lor., who is writing upon his tablets*). What art thou writing,
With such an earnest brow, upon thy tablets?
Lor. (*pointing to the Doge's body*). That *he* has paid me!
Chief of the Ten. What debt did he owe you?
Lor. A long and just one; Nature's debt and *mine.* [*Curtain falls.*

CAIN

A MYSTERY

'Now the Serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.' — *Gen.* ch. iii. v. 1.

TO
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.
THIS MYSTERY OF CAIN
IS INSCRIBED,
BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND,
AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

The following scenes are entitled 'A Mystery,' in conformity with the ancient title annexed to dramas upon similar subjects, which were styled 'Mysteries, or Moralities.' The author has by no means taken the same liberties with his subject which were common, formerly, as may be seen by any reader curious enough to refer to those very profane productions, whether in English, French, Italian, or Spanish. The author has endeavoured to preserve the language adapted to his characters; and where it is (and this is but rarely) taken from actual *Scripture*, he has made as little alteration, even of words, as the rhythm would permit. The reader will recollect that the book of Genesis does not state that Eve was tempted by a demon, but by 'the Serpent;' and that only because he was 'the most subtil of all the beasts of the field.' Whatever interpretation the Rabbins and the Fathers may have put upon this, I take the words as I find them, and reply, with Bishop Watson upon similar occasions, when the Fathers were quoted to him, as Moderator in the schools of Cambridge, 'Behold the Book!'—holding up the Scripture. It is to be recollected that my present subject has nothing to do with the *New Testament*, to which no reference can be here made without anachronism. With the poems upon similar topics, I have not been recently familiar. Since I was twenty I have never read Milton; but I had read him so frequently before, that this may make little difference. Gesner's *Death of Abel* I have never read since I was eight years of age, at Aberdeen. The general impression of my recollection is delight; but of the contents I remember only that Cain's wife was called Mahala, and Abel's Thirza: in the following pages I have called them 'Adah' and 'Zillah,' the earliest female names which occur in Genesis; they were those of Lamech's wives: those of Cain and Abel are not called by their names. Whether, then, a coincidence of subject may have caused the same in expression, I know nothing, and care as little.

The reader will please to bear in mind (what few choose to recollect), that there is no allusion to a future state in any of the books of Moses, nor indeed in the Old Testament. For a reason for this extraordinary omission he may consult Warburton's *Divine Legation;* whether satisfactory or not, no better has yet been assigned. I have therefore supposed it new to Cain, without, I hope, any perversion of Holy Writ.

With regard to the language of Lucifer, it was difficult for me to make him talk like a clergyman upon the same subjects; but I have done what I could to restrain him within the bounds of spiritual politeness. If he disclaims having tempted Eve in the shape of the Serpent, it is only because the book of Genesis has not the most distant allusion to any thing of the kind, but merely to the Serpent in his serpentine capacity.

Note.—The reader will perceive that the author has partly adopted in this poem the notion of Cuvier, that the world had been destroyed several times before the creation of man. This speculation, derived from the different strata and the bones of enormous and unknown animals found in them, is not contrary to the Mosaic account, but rather confirms it; as no human bones have yet been discovered in those strata, although those of many known animals are found near the remains of the unknown. The assertion of Lucifer, that the pre-Adamite world was also peopled by rational beings much more intelligent than man, and proportionably powerful to the mammoth, etc., etc., is, of course, a poetical fiction to help him to make out his case.

I ought to add, that there is a 'tramelogedia' of Alfieri, called *Abele.*—I have never read that, nor any other of the posthumous works of the writer, except his Life.

RAVENNA, *Sept.* 20, 1821.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN	ADAM. CAIN. ABEL.
SPIRITS	ANGEL OF THE LORD. LUCIFER.
WOMEN	EVE. ADAH. ZILLAH.

ACT I

SCENE I

The Land without Paradise.—Time, Sunrise.

ADAM, EVE, CAIN, ABEL, ADAH, ZILLAH, *offering a Sacrifice.*

Adam. God, the Eternal! Infinite! All-wise!—
Who out of darkness on the deep didst make
Light on the waters with a word—all hail!
Jehovah, with returning light, all hail!
Eve. God! who didst name the day, and separate
Morning from night, till then divided never,
Who didst divide the wave from wave, and call
Part of thy work the firmament—all hail!
Abel. God! who didst call the elements into
Earth, ocean, air, and fire, and with the day
And night, and worlds which these illuminate
Or shadow, madest beings to enjoy them,
And love both them and thee—all hail! all hail!
Adah. God, the Eternal! Parent of all things!
Who didst create these best and beauteous beings,
To be belovèd more than all save thee—
Let me love thee and them:—all hail! all hail!
Zillah. Oh, God! who loving, making, blessing all,
Yet didst permit the Serpent to creep in,
And drive my father forth from Paradise,
Keep us from further evil:—Hail! all hail!
Adam. Son Cain, my first-born, wherefore art thou silent?

Cain. Why should I speak?
Adam. To pray.
Cain. Have ye not pray'd?
Adam. We have, most fervently.
Cain. And loudly: I
Have heard you.
Adam. So will God, I trust.
Abel. Amen!
Adam. But thou, my eldest born, art silent still.
Cain. 'T is better I should be so.
Adam. Wherefore so?
Cain. I have nought to ask.
Adam. Nor aught to thank for?
Cain. No.
Adam. Dost thou not live?
Cain. Must I not die?
Eve. Alas!
The fruit of our forbidden tree begins
To fall.
Adam. And we must gather it again.
Oh, God! why didst thou plant the tree of knowledge?
Cain. And wherefore pluck'd ye not the tree of life?
Ye might have then defied him.
Adam. Oh! my son,
Blaspheme not: these are serpent's words.
Cain. Why not?
The snake spoke *truth*: it *was* the tree of knowledge;
It *was* the tree of life: knowledge is good,
And life is good; and how can both be evil?
Eve. My boy! thou speakest as I spoke, in sin,
Before thy birth: let me not see renew'd
My misery in thine. I have repented.
Let me not see my offspring fall into
The snares beyond the walls of Paradise,
Which e'en in Paradise destroy'd his parents.
Content thee with what *is*. Had we been so,
Thou now hadst been contented. — Oh, my son!
Adam. Our orisons completed, let us hence,
Each to his task of toil — not heavy, though
Needful: the earth is young, and yields us kindly
Her fruits with little labour.
Eve. Cain, my son,
Behold thy father cheerful and resign'd,
And do as he doth. [*Exeunt* ADAM *and* EVE.
Zillah. Wilt thou not, my brother?
Abel. Why wilt thou wear this gloom upon thy brow,
Which can avail thee nothing, save to rouse
The Eternal anger?
Adah. My belovèd Cain,
Wilt thou frown even on me?
Cain. No, Adah! no;
I fain would be alone a little while.
Abel, I 'm sick at heart: but it will pass.
Precede me, brother — I will follow shortly.
And you, too, sisters, tarry not behind;
Your gentleness must not be harshly met:
I 'll follow you anon.
Adah. If not, I will
Return to seek you here.
Abel. The peace of God
Be on your spirit, brother!
[*Exeunt* ABEL, ZILLAH, *and* ADAH.
Cain (*solus*). And this is
Life — Toil! and wherefore should I toil? — because
My father could not keep his place in Eden.
What had *I* done in this? — I was unborn:
I sought not to be born; nor love the state
To which that birth has brought me. Why did he
Yield to the serpent and the woman? or,
Yielding, why suffer? What was there in this?
The tree was planted, and why not for him?
If not, why place him near it, where it grew,
The fairest in the centre? They have but
One answer to all questions, ''T was *his* will,
And *he* is good.' How know I that? Because
He is all-powerful, must all-good, too, follow?
I judge but by the fruits — and they are bitter —
Which I must feed on for a fault not mine.
Whom have we here? — A shape like to the angels,
Yet of a sterner and a sadder aspect
Of spiritual essence: why do I quake?
Why should I fear him more than other spirits,
Whom I see daily wave their fiery swords
Before the gates round which I linger oft,
In twilight's hour, to catch a glimpse of those

Gardens which are my just inheritance,
Ere the night closes o'er the inhibited walls
And the immortal trees which overtop
The cherubim-defended battlements ?
If I shrink not from these, the fire-arm'd angels,
Why should I quail from him who now approaches ?
Yet he seems mightier far than them, nor less
Beauteous, and yet not all as beautiful
As he hath been, and might be: sorrow seems
Half of his immortality. And is it
So ? and can aught grieve save humanity ?
He cometh.

Enter LUCIFER.

Lucifer. Mortal !
Cain. Spirit, who art thou ?
Lucifer. Master of spirits.
Cain. And being so, canst thou
Leave them, and walk with dust ?
Lucifer. I know the thoughts
Of dust, and feel for it, and with you.
Cain. How !
You know my thoughts ?
Lucifer. They are the thoughts of all
Worthy of thought; — 't is your immortal part
Which speaks within you.
Cain. What immortal part ?
This has not been reveal'd: the tree of life
Was withheld from us by my father's folly,
While that of knowledge, by my mother's haste,
Was pluck'd too soon; and all the fruit is death !
Lucifer. They have deceived thee; thou shalt live.
Cain. I live,
But live to die: and, living, see no thing
To make death hateful, save an innate clinging,
A loathsome, and yet all invincible
Instinct of life, which I abhor, as I
Despise myself, yet cannot overcome —
And so I live. Would I had never lived !
Lucifer. Thou livest, and must live for ever: think not
The earth, which is thine outward cov'ring, is
Existence — it will cease, and thou wilt be
No less than thou art now.
Cain. No *less !* and why
No more ?
Lucifer. It may be thou shalt be as we.
Cain. And ye ?
Lucifer. Are everlasting.
Cain. Are ye happy ?
Lucifer. We are mighty.
Cain. Are ye happy ?
Lucifer. No; art thou ?
Cain. How should I be so ? Look on me !
Lucifer. Poor clay !
And thou pretendest to be wretched ! Thou !
Cain. I am: — and thou, with all thy might, what art thou ?
Lucifer. One who aspired to be what made thee, and
Would not have made thee what thou art.
Cain. Ah !
Thou look'st almost a god; and —
Lucifer. I am none:
And having fail'd to be one, would be nought
Save what I am. He conquer'd; let him reign !
Cain. Who ?
Lucifer. Thy sire's Maker and the earth's.
Cain. And heaven's,
And all that in them is. So I have heard
His seraphs sing; and so my father saith.
Lucifer. They say — what they must sing and say on pain
Of being that which I am — and thou art —
Of spirits and of men.
Cain. And what is that ?
Lucifer. Souls who dare use their immortality —
Souls who dare look the Omnipotent tyrant in
His everlasting face, and tell him that
His evil is not good ! If he has made,
As he saith — which I know not, nor believe —
But, if he made us — he cannot unmake:
We are immortal ! — nay, he 'd *have* us so,
That he may torture: — let him ! He is great —
But, in his greatness, is no happier than
We in our conflict ! Goodness would not make
Evil; and what else hath he made ? But let him
Sit on his vast and solitary throne,
Creating worlds, to make eternity
Less burthensome to his immense existence
And unparticipated solitude;
Let him crowd orb on orb: he is alone

Indefinite, indissoluble tyrant;
Could he but crush himself, 't were the best boon
He ever granted: but let him reign on,
And multiply himself in misery!
Spirits and men, at least we sympathise —
And, suffering in concert, make our pangs,
Innumerable, more endurable,
By the unbounded sympathy of all
With all! But *He!* so wretched in his height,
So restless in his wretchedness, must still
Create, and re-create —
Cain. Thou speak'st to me of things which long have swum
In visions through my thought: I never could
Reconcile what I saw with what I heard.
My father and my mother talk to me
Of serpents, and of fruits and trees: I see
The gates of what they call their Paradise
Guarded by fiery-sworded cherubim,
Which shut them out, and me: I feel the weight
Of daily toil and constant thought: I look
Around a world where I seem nothing, with
Thoughts which arise within me, as if they
Could master all things: — but I thought alone
This misery was *mine.* — My father is
Tamed down; my mother has forgot the mind
Which made her thirst for knowledge at the risk
Of an eternal curse; my brother is
A watching shepherd boy, who offers up
The firstlings of the flock to him who bids
The earth yield nothing to us without sweat;
My sister Zillah sings an earlier hymn
Than the birds' matins; and my Adah, my
Own and belovèd, she, too, understands not
The mind which overwhelms me: never till
Now met I aught to sympathise with me.
'T is well — I rather would consort with spirits.
Lucifer. And hadst thou not been fit by thine own soul
For such companionship, I would not now
Have stood before thee as I am: a serpent
Had been enough to charm ye, as before.
Cain. Ah! didst *thou* tempt my mother?
Lucifer. I tempt none,
Save with the truth: was not the tree, the tree
Of knowledge? and was not the tree of life
Still fruitful? Did *I* bid her pluck them not?
Did *I* plant things prohibited within
The reach of beings innocent, and curious
By their own innocence? I would have made ye
Gods; and even He who thrust ye forth, so thrust ye
Because 'ye should not eat the fruits of life,
And become gods as we.' Were those his words?
Cain. They were, as I have heard from those who heard them,
In thunder.
Lucifer. Then who was the demon? He
Who would not let ye live, or he who would
Have made ye live for ever in the joy
And power of knowledge?
Cain. Would they had snatch'd both
The fruits, or neither!
Lucifer. One is yours already;
The other may be still.
Cain. How so?
Lucifer. By being
Yourselves, in your resistance. Nothing can
Quench the mind, if the mind will be itself
And centre of surrounding things — 't is made
To sway.
Cain. But didst thou tempt my parents?
Lucifer. I?
Poor clay! what should I tempt them for, or how?
Cain. They say the serpent was a spirit.
Lucifer. Who
Saith that? It is not written so on high:
The proud One will not so far falsify,
Though man's vast fears and little vanity
Would make him cast upon the spiritual nature
His own low failing. The snake *was* the snake —
No more; and yet not less than those he tempted,
In nature being earth also — *more* in *wisdom*,
Since he could overcome them, and foreknew
The knowledge fatal to their narrow joys.
Think'st thou I 'd take the shape of things that die?

Cain. But the thing had a demon ?
Lucifer. He but woke one
In those he spake to with his forky tongue.
I tell thee that the serpent was no more
Than a mere serpent: ask the cherubim
Who guard the tempting tree. When thousand ages
Have roll'd o'er your dead ashes, and your seed's,
The seed of the then world may thus array
Their earliest fault in fable, and attribute
To them a shape I scorn, as I scorn all
That bows to him who made things but to bend
Before his sullen, sole eternity;
But we, who see the truth, must speak it. Thy
Fond parents listen'd to a creeping thing,
And fell. For what should spirits tempt them ? What
Was there to envy in the narrow bounds
Of Paradise, that spirits who pervade
Space — but I speak to thee of what thou know'st not,
With all thy tree of knowledge.
Cain. But thou canst not
Speak aught of knowledge which I would not know,
And do not thirst to know, and bear a mind
To know.
Lucifer. And heart to look on ?
Cain. Be it proved.
Lucifer. Darest thou to look on Death ?
Cain. He has not yet
Been seen.
Lucifer. But must be undergone.
Cain. My father
Says he is something dreadful, and my mother
Weeps when he 's named; and Abel lifts his eyes
To heaven, and Zillah casts hers to the earth,
And sighs a prayer; and Adah looks on me,
And speaks not.
Lucifer. And thou ?
Cain. Thoughts unspeakable
Crowd in my breast to burning, when I hear
Of this almighty Death, who is, it seems,
Inevitable. Could I wrestle with him ?
I wrestled with the lion, when a boy,
In play, till he ran roaring from my gripe.
Lucifer. It has no shape; but will absorb all things
That bear the form of earth-born being.
Cain. Ah!
I thought it was a being: who could do
Such evil things to beings save a being ?
Lucifer. Ask the Destroyer.
Cain. Who ?
Lucifer. The Maker — call him
Which name thou wilt: he makes but to destroy.
Cain. I knew not that, yet thought it, since I heard
Of death; although I know not what it is,
Yet it seems horrible. I have look'd out
In the vast desolate night in search of him;
And when I saw gigantic shadows in
The umbrage of the walls of Eden, chequer'd
By the far-flashing of the cherubs' swords,
I watch'd for what I thought his coming; for
With fear rose longing in my heart to know
What 't was which shook us all — but nothing came.
And then I turn'd my weary eyes from off
Our native and forbidden Paradise,
Up to the lights above us, in the azure,
Which are so beautiful: shall they, too, die ?
Lucifer. Perhaps — but long outlive both thine and thee.
Cain. I 'm glad of that: I would not have them die —
They are so lovely. What is death ? I fear,
I feel, it is a dreadful thing; but what,
I cannot compass: 't is denounced against us,
Both them who sinn'd and sinn'd not, as an ill —
What ill ?
Lucifer. To be resolved into the earth.
Cain. But shall I know it ?
Lucifer. As I know not death,
I cannot answer.
Cain. Were I quiet earth
That were no evil: would I ne'er had been
Aught else but dust!
Lucifer. That is a grovelling wish,
Less than thy father's, for he wish'd to know.
Cain. But not to live, or wherefore pluck'd he not
The life-tree ?
Lucifer. He was hinder'd.
Cain. Deadly error!
Not to snatch first that fruit: — but ere he pluck'd
The knowledge, he was ignorant of death.

Alas! I scarcely now know what it is,
And yet I fear it — fear I know not what!
Lucifer. And I, who know all things, fear nothing: see
What is true knowledge.
Cain. Wilt thou teach me all?
Lucifer. Ay, upon one condition.
Cain. Name it.
Lucifer. That
Thou dost fall down and worship me — thy Lord.
Cain. Thou art not the Lord my father worships.
Lucifer. No.
Cain. His equal?
Lucifer. No; — I have nought in common with him!
Nor would: I would be aught above — beneath —
Aught save a sharer or a servant of
His power. I dwell apart; but I am great: —
Many there are who worship me, and more
Who shall — be thou amongst the first.
Cain. I never
As yet have bow'd unto my father's God,
Although my brother Abel oft implores
That I would join with him in sacrifice: —
Why should I bow to thee?
Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er bow'd
To him?
Cain. Have I not said it? — need I say it?
Could not thy mighty knowledge teach thee that?
Lucifer. He who bows not to him has bow'd to me!
Cain. But I will bend to neither.
Lucifer. Ne'er the less,
Thou art my worshipper: not worshipping
Him makes thee mine the same.
Cain. And what is that?
Lucifer. Thou 'lt know here — and hereafter.
Cain. Let me but
Be taught the mystery of my being.
Lucifer. Follow
Where I will lead thee.
Cain. But I must retire
To till the earth — for I had promised —
Lucifer. What?
Cain. To cull some first-fruits.
Lucifer. Why?
Cain. To offer up
With Abel on an altar.
Lucifer. Saidst thou not
Thou ne'er hadst bent to him who made thee?
Cain. Yes —
But Abel's earnest prayer has wrought upon me;
The offering is more his than mine — and Adah —
Lucifer. Why dost thou hesitate?
Cain. She is my sister,
Born on the same day, of the same womb; and
She wrung from me, with tears, this promise; and
Rather than see her weep, I would, methinks,
Bear all — and worship aught.
Lucifer. Then follow me!
Cain. I will.

Enter ADAH.

Adah. My brother, I have come for thee;
It is our hour of rest and joy — and we
Have less without thee. Thou hast labour'd not
This morn; but I have done thy task: the fruits
Are ripe, and glowing as the light which ripens:
Come away.
Cain. Seest thou not?
Adah. I see an angel;
We have seen many: will he share our hour
Of rest? — he is welcome.
Cain. But he is not like
The angels we have seen.
Adah. Are there, then, others?
But he is welcome, as they were: they deign'd
To be our guests — will he?
Cain (*to Lucifer*). Wilt thou?
Lucifer. I ask
Thee to be mine.
Cain. I must away with him.
Adah. And leave us?
Cain. Ay.
Adah. And *me?*
Cain. Belovèd Adah!
Adah. Let me go with thee.
Lucifer. No, she must not.
Adah. Who
Art thou that steppest between heart and heart?
Cain. He is a god.
Adah. How know'st thou?

Cain. He speaks like
A god.
Adah. So did the serpent, and it lied.
Lucifer. Thou errest, Adah! — was not the tree that
Of knowledge?
Adah. Ay — to our eternal sorrow.
Lucifer. And yet that grief is knowledge — so he lied not:
And if he did betray you, 't was with truth;
And truth in its own essence cannot be
But good.
Adah. But all we know of it has gather'd
Evil on ill: expulsion from our home,
And dread, and toil, and sweat, and heaviness;
Remorse of that which was — and hope of that
Which cometh not. Cain! walk not with this spirit.
Bear with what we have borne, and love me — I
Love thee.
Lucifer. More than thy mother and thy sire?
Adah. I do. Is that a sin, too?
Lucifer. No, not yet:
It one day will be in your children.
Adah. What!
Must not my daughter love her brother Enoch?
Lucifer. Not as thou lovest Cain.
Adah. Oh, my God!
Shall they not love and bring forth things that love
Out of their love? have they not drawn their milk
Out of this bosom? was not he, their father,
Born of the same sole womb, in the same hour
With me? did we not love each other? and
In multiplying our being multiply
Things which will love each other as we love
Them? — And as I love thee, my Cain! go not
Forth with this spirit; he is not of ours.
Lucifer. The sin I speak of is not of my making,
And cannot be a sin in you — whate'er
It seem in those who will replace ye in
Mortality.
Adah. What is the sin which is not
Sin in itself? Can circumstance make sin
Or virtue? — if it doth, we are the slaves
Of —
Lucifer. Higher things than ye are slaves: and higher
Than them or ye would be so, did they not
Prefer an independency of torture
To the smooth agonies of adulation,
In hymns and harpings, and self-seeking prayers,
To that which is omnipotent, because
It is omnipotent, and not from love,
But terror and self-hope.
Adah. Omnipotence
Must be all goodness.
Lucifer. Was it so in Eden?
Adah. Fiend! tempt me not with beauty; thou art fairer
Than was the serpent, and as false.
Lucifer. As true.
Ask Eve, your mother: bears she not the knowledge
Of good and evil?
Adah. Oh, my mother! thou
Hast pluck'd a fruit more fatal to thine offspring
Than to thyself; thou at the least hast pass'd
Thy youth in Paradise, in innocent
And happy intercourse with happy spirits:
But we, thy children, ignorant of Eden,
Are girt about by demons, who assume
The words of God and tempt us with our own
Dissatisfied and curious thoughts — as thou
Wert work'd on by the snake in thy most flush'd
And heedless, harmless wantonness of bliss.
I cannot answer this immortal thing
Which stands before me; I cannot abhor him;
I look upon him with a pleasing fear,
And yet I fly not from him: in his eye
There is a fastening attraction which
Fixes my fluttering eyes on his; my heart
Beats quick; he awes me, and yet draws me near,
Nearer, and nearer: — Cain — Cain — save me from him!
Cain. What dreads my Adah? This is no ill spirit.
Adah. He is not God — nor God's: I have beheld
The cherubs and the seraphs; he looks not
Like them.

Cain. But there are spirits loftier still —
The archangels.
Lucifer. And still loftier than the archangels.
Adah. Ay — but not blessèd.
Lucifer. If the blessedness
Consists in slavery — no.
Adah. I have heard it said,
The seraphs *love most* — cherubim *know most* ;
And this should be a cherub — since he loves not.
Lucifer. And if the higher knowledge quenches love,
What must *he be* you cannot love when known ?
Since the all-knowing cherubim love least,
The seraphs' love can be but ignorance:
That they are not compatible, the doom
Of thy fond parents, for their daring, proves.
Choose betwixt love and knowledge — since there is
No other choice. Your sire has chosen already;
His worship is but fear.
Adah. Oh, Cain ! choose love.
Cain. For thee, my Adah, I choose not — it was
Born with me — but I love nought else.
Adah. Our parents ?
Cain. Did they love us when they snatch'd from the tree
That which hath driven us all from Paradise ?
Adah. We were not born then — and if we had been,
Should we not love them and our children, Cain ?
Cain. My little Enoch ! and his lisping sister !
Could I but deem them happy, I would half
Forget — but it can never be forgotten
Through thrice a thousand generations ! never
Shall men love the remembrance of the man
Who sow'd the seed of evil and mankind
In the same hour ! They pluck'd the tree of science,
And sin — and not content with their own sorrow,
Begot *me* — *thee* — and all the few that are,
And all the unnumber'd and innumerable
Multitudes, millions, myriads, which may be,
To inherit agonies accumulated
By ages ! — and *I* must be sire of such things !
Thy beauty and thy love — my love and joy,
The rapturous moment and the placid hour,
All we love in our children and each other,
But lead them and ourselves through many years
Of sin and pain — or few, but still of sorrow,
Intercheck'd with an instant of brief pleasure,
To Death — the unknown ! Methinks the tree of knowledge
Hath not fulfill'd its promise: — if they sinn'd,
At least they ought to have known all things that are
Of knowledge — and the mystery of death.
What do they know ? — that they are miserable.
What need of snakes and fruits to teach us that ?
Adah. I am not wretched, Cain, and if thou
Wert happy —
Cain. Be thou happy, then, alone —
I will have nought to do with happiness,
Which humbles me and mine.
Adah. Alone I could not,
Nor *would* be happy: but with those around us,
I think I could be so, despite of death,
Which, as I know it not, I dread not, though
It seems an awful shadow — if I may
Judge from what I have heard.
Lucifer. And thou couldst not
Alone, thou say'st, be happy ?
Adah. Alone ! Oh, my God !
Who could be happy and alone, or good ?
To me my solitude seems sin; unless
When I think how soon I shall see my brother,
His brother, and our children, and our parents.
Lucifer. Yet thy God is alone; and is he happy,
Lonely, and good ?
Adah. He is not so; he hath
The angels and the mortals to make happy,
And thus becomes so in diffusing joy.
What else can joy be, but the spreading joy ?

Lucifer. Ask of your sire, the exile fresh from Eden;
Or of his first-born son: ask your own heart;
It is not tranquil.
Adah. Alas, no! and you —
Are you of heaven?
Lucifer. If I am not, enquire
The cause of this all-spreading happiness
(Which you proclaim) of the all-great and good
Maker of life and living things; it is
His secret, and he keeps it. *We* must bear,
And some of us resist, and both in vain,
His seraphs say; but it is worth the trial,
Since better may not be without. There is
A wisdom in the spirit, which directs
To right, as in the dim blue air the eye
Of you, young mortals, lights at once upon
The star which watches, welcoming the morn.
Adah. It is a beautiful star; I love it for
Its beauty.
Lucifer. And why not adore?
Adah. Our father
Adores the Invisible only.
Lucifer. But the symbols
Of the Invisible are the loveliest
Of what is visible; and yon bright star
Is leader of the host of heaven.
Adah. Our father
Saith that he has beheld the God himself
Who made him and our mother.
Lucifer. Hast *thou* seen him?
Adah. Yes — in his works.
Lucifer. But in his being?
Adah. No —
Save in my father, who is God's own image;
Or in his angels, who are like to thee —
And brighter, yet less beautiful and powerful
In seeming: as the silent sunny noon,
All light they look upon us; but thou seem'st
Like an ethereal night, where long white clouds
Streak the deep purple, and unnumber'd stars
Spangle the wonderful mysterious vault
With things that look as if they would be suns;
So beautiful, unnumber'd, and endearing,
Not dazzling, and yet drawing us to them,
They fill my eyes with tears, and so dost thou.
Thou seem'st unhappy: do not make us so,
And I will weep for thee.
Lucifer. Alas! those tears!
Couldst thou but know what oceans will be shed —
Adah. By me?
Lucifer. By all.
Adah. What all?
Lucifer. The million millions —
The myriad myriads — the all-peopled earth —
The unpeopled earth — and the o'erpeopled Hell,
Of which thy bosom is the germ.
Adah. O Cain!
This spirit curseth us.
Cain. Let him say on;
Him will I follow.
Adah. Whither?
Lucifer. To a place
Whence he shall come back to thee in an hour;
But in that hour see things of many days.
Adah. How can that be?
Lucifer. Did not your Maker make
Out of old worlds this new one in few days?
And cannot I, who aided in this work,
Show in an hour what he hath made in many,
Or hath destroy'd in few?
Cain. Lead on.
Adah. Will he,
In sooth, return within an hour?
Lucifer. He shall.
With us acts are exempt from time, and we
Can crowd eternity into an hour,
Or stretch an hour into eternity:
We breathe not by a mortal measurement —
But that's a mystery. Cain, come on with me.
Adah. Will he return?
Lucifer. Ay, woman! he alone
Of mortals from that place (the first and last
Who shall return, save ONE) shall come back to thee,
To make that silent and expectant world
As populous as this: at present there
Are few inhabitants.
Adah. Where dwellest thou?
Lucifer. Throughout all space. Where should I dwell? Where are
Thy God or Gods — there am I: all things are

Divided with me; life and death — and time —
Eternity — and heaven and earth — and that
Which is not heaven nor earth, but peopled with
Those who once peopled or shall people both —
These are my realms! So that I do divide
His, and possess a kingdom which is not
His. If I were not that which I have said,
Could I stand here? His angels are within
Your vision.
Adah. So they were when the fair serpent
Spoke with our mother first.
Lucifer. Cain! thou hast heard.
If thou dost long for knowledge, I can satiate
That thirst; nor ask thee to partake of fruits
Which shall deprive thee of a single good
The conqueror has left thee. Follow me.
Cain. Spirit, I have said it.
[*Exeunt* Lucifer *and* Cain.
Adah (*follows, exclaiming*). Cain! my brother! Cain!

ACT II

Scene I

The Abyss of Space.

Cain. I tread on air, and sink not; yet I fear
To sink.
Lucifer. Have faith in me, and thou shalt be
Borne on the air, of which I am the prince.
Cain. Can I do so without impiety?
Lucifer. Believe — and sink not! doubt — and perish! thus
Would run the edict of the other God,
Who names me demon to his angels; they
Echo the sound to miserable things,
Which, knowing nought beyond their shallow senses,
Worship the word which strikes their ear, and deem
Evil or good what is proclaim'd to them
In their abasement. I will have none such:
Worship or worship not, thou shalt behold
The worlds beyond thy little world, nor be
Amerced for doubts beyond thy little life,
With torture of *my* dooming. There will come
An hour, when, toss'd upon some water-drops,
A man shall say to a man, 'Believe in me,
And walk the waters;' and the man shall walk
The billows and be safe. *I* will not say,
Believe in *me*, as a conditional creed
To save thee; but fly with me o'er the gulf
Of space an equal flight, and I will show
What thou dar'st not deny, — the history
Of past, and present, and of future worlds.
Cain. Oh, god, or demon, or whate'er thou art,
Is yon our earth?
Lucifer. Dost thou not recognise
The dust which form'd your father?
Cain. Can it be?
Yon small blue circle, swinging in far ether,
With an inferior circlet near it still,
Which looks like that which lit our earthly night?
Is this our Paradise? Where are its walls,
And they who guard them?
Lucifer. Point me out the site
Of Paradise.
Cain. How should I? As we move
Like sunbeams onward, it grows small and smaller,
And as it waxes little, and then less,
Gathers a halo round it, like the light
Which shone the roundest of the stars, when I
Beheld them from the skirts of Paradise.
Methinks they both, as we recede from them,
Appear to join the innumerable stars
Which are around us; and, as we move on,
Increase their myriads.
Lucifer. And if there should be
Worlds greater than thine own, inhabited
By greater things, and they themselves far more
In number than the dust of thy dull earth,
Though multiplied to animated atoms,
All living, and all doom'd to death, and wretched,
What wouldst thou think?
Cain. I should be proud of thought
Which knew such things.
Lucifer. But if that high thought were

Link'd to a servile mass of matter, and,
Knowing such things, aspiring to such things,
And science still beyond them, were chain'd down
To the most gross and petty paltry wants,
All foul and fulsome, and the very best
Of thine enjoyments a sweet degradation,
A most enervating and filthy cheat
To lure thee on to the renewal of
Fresh souls and bodies, all foredoom'd to be
As frail and few so happy —
Cain. Spirit! I
Know nought of death, save as a dreadful thing
Of which I have heard my parents speak, as of
A hideous heritage I owe to them
No less than life; a heritage not happy,
If I may judge, till now. But, spirit! if
It be as thou hast said (and I within
Feel the prophetic torture of its truth),
Here let me die: for to give birth to those
Who can but suffer many years, and die,
Methinks is merely propagating death,
And multiplying murder.
Lucifer. Thou canst not
All die — there is what must survive.
Cain. The Other
Spake not of this unto my father, when
He shut him forth from Paradise, with death
Written upon his forehead. But at least
Let what is mortal of me perish, that
I may be in the rest as angels are.
Lucifer. I am angelic: wouldst thou be as I am?
Cain. I know not what thou art: I see thy power,
And see thou show'st me things beyond *my* power,
Beyond all power of my born faculties,
Although inferior still to my desires
And my conceptions.
Lucifer. What are they which dwell
So humbly in their pride as to sojourn
With worms in clay?
Cain. And what art thou who dwellest
So haughtily in spirit, and canst range
Nature and immortality — and yet
Seem'st sorrowful?
Lucifer. I seem that which I am;
And therefore do I ask of thee, if thou
Wouldst be immortal?
Cain. Thou hast said, I must be
Immortal in despite of me. I knew not
This until lately — but since it must be,
Let me, or happy or unhappy, learn
To anticipate my immortality.
Lucifer. Thou didst before I came upon thee.
Cain. How?
Lucifer. By suffering.
Cain. And must torture be immortal?
Lucifer. We and thy sons will try. But now, behold!
Is it not glorious?
Cain. Oh, thou beautiful
And unimaginable ether! and
Ye multiplying masses of increased
And still increasing lights! what are ye? what
Is this blue wilderness of interminable
Air, where ye roll along, as I have seen
The leaves along the limpid streams of Eden?
Is your course measured for ye? Or do ye
Sweep on in your unbounded revelry
Through an aërial universe of endless
Expansion — at which my soul aches to think —
Intoxicated with eternity?
Oh God! Oh Gods! or whatsoe'er ye are!
How beautiful ye are! how beautiful
Your works, or accidents, or whatsoe'er
They may be! Let me die as atoms die
(If that they die), or know ye in your might
And knowledge! My thoughts are not in this hour
Unworthy what I see, though my dust is; —
Spirit! let me expire, or see them nearer.
Lucifer. Art thou not nearer? look back to thine earth!
Cain. Where is it? I see nothing save a mass
Of most innumerable lights.
Lucifer. Look there!
Cain. I cannot see it.
Lucifer. Yet it sparkles still.
Cain. That! — yonder!
Lucifer. Yea.
Cain. And wilt thou tell me so?
Why, I have seen the fire-flies and fire-worms
Sprinkle the dusky groves and the green banks
In the dim twilight, brighter than yon world
Which bears them.

Lucifer. Thou hast seen both worms and worlds,
Each bright and sparkling — what dost think of them?
Cain. That they are beautiful in their own sphere,
And that the night, which makes both beautiful,
The little shining fire-fly in its flight,
And the immortal star in its great course,
Must both be guided.
Lucifer. But by whom or what?
Cain. Show me.
Lucifer. Dar'st thou behold?
Cain. How know I what
I *dare* behold? As yet, thou hast shown nought
I dare not gaze on further.
Lucifer. On, then, with me.
Wouldst thou behold things mortal or immortal?
Cain. Why, what are things?
Lucifer. *Both* partly; but what doth
Sit next thy heart?
Cain. The things I see.
Lucifer. But what
Sate nearest it?
Cain. The things I have not seen,
Nor ever shall — the mysteries of death.
Lucifer. What, if I show to thee things which have died,
As I have shown thee much which cannot die?
Cain. Do so.
Lucifer. Away, then, on our mighty wings!
Cain. Oh, how we cleave the blue! The stars fade from us!
The earth! where is my earth? Let me look on it,
For I was made of it.
Lucifer. 'T is now beyond thee,
Less, in the universe, than thou in it;
Yet deem not that thou canst escape it; thou
Shalt soon return to earth and all its dust:
'T is part of thy eternity, and mine.
Cain. Where dost thou lead me?
Lucifer. To what was before thee!
The phantasm of the world; of which thy world
Is but the wreck.
Cain. What! is it not then new?
Lucifer. No more than life is; and that was ere thou
Or *I* were, or the things which seem to us
Greater than either. Many things will have
No end; and some, which would pretend to have
Had no beginning, have had one as mean
As thou; and mightier things have been extinct
To make way for much meaner than we can
Surmise; for *moments* only and the *space*
Have been and must be all *unchangeable*.
But changes make not death, except to clay;
But thou art clay, and canst but comprehend
That which was clay, and such thou shalt behold.
Cain. Clay, spirit! what thou wilt, I can survey.
Lucifer. Away, then!
Cain. But the lights fade from me fast,
And some till now grew larger as we approach'd
And wore the look of worlds.
Lucifer. And such they are.
Cain. And Edens in them?
Lucifer. It may be.
Cain. And men?
Lucifer. Yea, or things higher.
Cain. Ay, and serpents too?
Lucifer. Wouldst thou have men without them? must no reptiles
Breathe save the erect ones?
Cain. How the lights recede!
Where fly we?
Lucifer. To the world of phantoms, which
Are beings past, and shadows still to come.
Cain. But it grows dark and dark — the stars are gone!
Lucifer. And yet thou seest.
Cain. 'T is a fearful light!
No sun, no moon, no lights innumerable —
The very blue of the empurpled night
Fades to a dreary twilight, yet I see
Huge dusky masses: but unlike the worlds
We were approaching, which, begirt with light,
Seem'd full of life even when their atmosphere
Of light gave way, and show'd them taking shapes
Unequal, of deep valleys and vast mountains;
And some emitting sparks, and some displaying
Enormous liquid plains, and some begirt
With luminous belts, and floating moons, which took

Like them the features of fair earth: — instead,
All here seems dark and dreadful.
Lucifer. But distinct.
Thou seekest to behold death and dead things?
Cain. I seek it not; but as I know there are
Such, and that my sire's sin makes him and me,
And all that we inherit, liable
To such, I would behold at once what I
Must one day see perforce.
Lucifer. Behold!
Cain. 'T is darkness.
Lucifer. And so it shall be ever; but we will
Unfold its gates!
Cain. Enormous vapours roll
Apart — what 's this?
Lucifer. Enter!
Cain. Can I return?
Lucifer. Return! be sure: how else should death be peopled?
Its present realm is thin to what it will be,
Through thee and thine.
Cain. The clouds still open wide
And wider, and make widening circles round us.
Lucifer. Advance!
Cain. And thou?
Lucifer. Fear not — without me thou
Couldst not have gone beyond thy world. On! on!
[*They disappear through the clouds.*

SCENE II

Hades.

Enter LUCIFER *and* CAIN.

Cain. How silent and how vast are these dim worlds!
For they seem more than one, and yet more peopled
Than the huge brilliant luminous orbs which swung
So thickly in the upper air, that I
Had deem'd them rather the bright populace
Of some all unimaginable heaven
Than things to be inhabited themselves,
But that on drawing near them I beheld
Their swelling into palpable immensity
Of matter, which seem'd made for life to dwell on,
Rather than life itself. But here, all is
So shadowy and so full of twilight, that
It speaks of a day past.
Lucifer. It is the realm
Of death. — Wouldst have it present?
Cain. Till I know
That which it really is, I cannot answer.
But if it be as I have heard my father
Deal out in his long homilies, 't is a thing —
Oh God! I dare not think on 't! Cursèd be
He who invented life that leads to death!
Or the dull mass of life, that, being life,
Could not retain, but needs must forfeit it —
Even for the innocent!
Lucifer. Dost thou curse thy father?
Cain. Cursed he not me in giving me my birth?
Cursed he not me before my birth, in daring
To pluck the fruit forbidden?
Lucifer. Thou say'st well:
The curse is mutual 'twixt thy sire and thee —
But for thy sons and brother?
Cain. Let them share it
With me, their sire and brother! What else is
Bequeath'd to me? I leave them my inheritance.
Oh, ye interminable gloomy realms
Of swimming shadows and enormous shapes,
Some fully shown, some indistinct, and all
Mighty and melancholy — what are ye?
Live ye, or have ye lived?
Lucifer. Somewhat of both.
Cain. Then what is death?
Lucifer. What? Hath not he who made ye
Said 't is another life?
Cain. Till now he hath
Said nothing, save that all shall die.
Lucifer. Perhaps
He one day will unfold that further secret.
Cain. Happy the day!
Lucifer. Yes; happy! when unfolded,
Through agonies unspeakable, and clogg'd
With agonies eternal, to innumerable
Yet unborn myriads of unconscious atoms,
All to be animated for this only!
Cain. What are these mighty phantoms which I see
Floating around me? — They wear not the form
Of the intelligences I have seen
Round our regretted and unenter'd Eden,
Nor wear the form of man as I have view'd it

In Adam's, and in Abel's, and in mine,
Nor in my sister-bride's, nor in my children's:
And yet they have an aspect, which, though not
Of men nor angels, looks like something which,
If not the last, rose higher than the first,
Haughty, and high, and beautiful, and full
Of seeming strength, but of inexplicable
Shape; for I never saw such. They bear not
The wing of seraph, nor the face of man,
Nor form of mightiest brute, nor aught that is
Now breathing; mighty yet and beautiful
As the most beautiful and mighty which
Live, and yet so unlike them, that I scarce
Can call them living.
Lucifer. Yet they lived.
Cain. Where?
Lucifer. Where
Thou livest.
Cain. When?
Lucifer. On what thou callest earth
They did inhabit.
Cain. Adam is the first.
Lucifer. Of thine, I grant thee — but too mean to be
The last of these.
Cain. And what are they?
Lucifer. That which
Thou shalt be.
Cain. But what *were* they?
Lucifer. Living, high,
Intelligent, good, great, and glorious things,
As much superior unto all thy sire,
Adam, could e'er have been in Eden, as
The sixty-thousandth generation shall be,
In its dull damp degeneracy, to
Thee and thy son; — and how weak they are, judge
By thy own flesh.
Cain. Ah me! and did *they* perish?
Lucifer. Yes, from their earth, as thou wilt fade from thine.
Cain. But was *mine* theirs?
Lucifer. It was.
Cain. But not as now.
It is too little and too lowly to
Sustain such creatures.
Lucifer. True, it was more glorious.
Cain. And wherefore did it fall?
Lucifer. Ask him who fells.
Cain. But how?
Lucifer. By a most crushing and inexorable
Destruction and disorder of the elements,
Which struck a world to chaos, as a chaos
Subsiding has struck out a world: such things,
Though rare in time, are frequent in eternity. —
Pass on, and gaze upon the past.
Cain 'T is awful!
Lucifer. And true. Behold these phantoms! they were once
Material as thou art.
Cain. And must I be
Like them?
Lucifer. Let He who made thee answer that.
I show thee what thy predecessors are,
And what they *were* thou feelest, in degree
Inferior as thy petty feelings and
Thy pettier portion of the immortal part
Of high intelligence and earthly strength.
What ye in common have with what they had
Is life, and what ye *shall* have — death: the rest
Of your poor attributes is such as suits
Reptiles engender'd out of the subsiding
Slime of a mighty universe, crush'd into
A scarcely-yet shaped planet, peopled with
Things whose enjoyment was to be in blindness —
A Paradise of Ignorance, from which
Knowledge was barr'd as poison. But behold
What these superior beings are or were;
Or, if it irk thee, turn thee back and till
The earth, thy task — I 'll waft thee there in safety.
Cain. No; I 'll stay here.
Lucifer. How long?
Cain. For ever! Since
I must one day return here from the earth,
I rather would remain; I am sick of all
That dust has shown me — let me dwell in shadows.
Lucifer. It cannot be: thou now beholdest as
A vision that which is reality.
To make thyself fit for this dwelling, thou
Must pass through what the things thou seest have pass'd —
The gates of death —
Cain. By what gate have we enter'd
Even now?

Lucifer. By mine! But, plighted to return,
My spirit buoys thee up to breathe in regions
Where all is breathless save thyself. Gaze on;
But do not think to dwell here till thine hour
Is come.
Cain. And these, too; can they ne'er repass
To earth again?
Lucifer. *Their* earth is gone for ever —
So changed by its convulsion, they would not
Be conscious to a single present spot
Of its new scarcely harden'd surface — 't was —
Oh, what a beautiful world it *was!*
Cain. And is.
It is not with the earth, though I must till it,
I feel at war, but that I may not profit
By what it bears of beautiful, untoiling,
Nor gratify my thousand swelling thoughts
With knowledge, nor allay my thousand fears
Of death and life.
Lucifer. What thy world is, thou seest,
But canst not comprehend the shadow of
That which it was.
Cain. And those enormous creatures,
Phantoms inferior in intelligence
(At least so seeming) to the things we have pass'd,
Resembling somewhat the wild habitants
Of the deep woods of earth, the hugest which
Roar nightly in the forest, but ten-fold
In magnitude and terror; taller than
The cherub-guarded walls of Eden, with
Eyes flashing like the fiery swords which fence them,
And tusks projecting like the trees stripp'd of
Their bark and branches — what were they?
Lucifer. That which
The Mammoth is in thy world; — but these lie
By myriads underneath its surface.
Cain. But
None on it?
Lucifer. No; for thy frail race to war
With them would render the curse on it useless —
'T would be destroy'd so early.
Cain. But why *war?*
Lucifer. You have forgotten the denunciation
Which drove your race from Eden — war with all things,
And death to all things, and disease to most things,
And pangs, and bitterness; these were the fruits
Of the forbidden tree.
Cain. But animals —
Did they, too, eat of it, that they must die?
Lucifer. Your Maker told ye, *they* were made for you,
As you for him. You would not have their doom
Superior to your own? Had Adam not
Fallen, all had stood.
Cain. Alas, the hopeless wretches!
They too must share my sire's fate, like his sons;
Like them, too, without having shared the apple;
Like them, too, without the so dear-bought *knowledge!*
It was a lying tree — for we *know* nothing.
At least it *promised knowledge* at the *price*
Of death — but *knowledge* still: but what *knows* man?
Lucifer. It may be death leads to the *highest* knowledge;
And being of all things the sole thing certain,
At least leads to the *surest* science: therefore
The tree was true, though deadly.
Cain. These dim realms!
I see them, but I know them not.
Lucifer. Because
Thy hour is yet afar, and matter cannot
Comprehend spirit wholly — but 't is something
To know there are such realms.
Cain. We knew already
That there was death.
Lucifer. But not what was beyond it.
Cain. Nor know I now.
Lucifer. Thou knowest that there is
A state, and many states beyond thine own —
And this thou knewest not this morn.

Cain. But all
Seems dim and shadowy.
Lucifer. Be content; it will
Seem clearer to thine immortality.
Cain. And yon immeasurable liquid space
Of glorious azure which floats on beyond us,
Which looks like water, and which I should deem
The river which flows out of Paradise
Past my own dwelling, but that it is bankless
And boundless, and of an ethereal hue —
What is it?
Lucifer. There is still some such on earth,
Although inferior, and thy children shall
Dwell near it — 't is the phantasm of an ocean.
Cain. 'T is like another world; a liquid sun —
And those inordinate creatures sporting o'er
Its shining surface?
Lucifer. Are its habitants,
The past leviathans.
Cain. And yon immense
Serpent, which rears his dripping mane and vasty
Head ten times higher than the haughtiest cedar
Forth from the abyss, looking as he could coil
Himself around the orbs we lately look'd on —
Is he not of the kind which bask'd beneath
The tree in Eden?
Lucifer. Eve, thy mother, best
Can tell what shape of serpent tempted her.
Cain. This seems too terrible. No doubt the other
Had more of beauty.
Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er beheld him?
Cain. Many of the same kind (at least so call'd),
But never that precisely which persuaded
The fatal fruit, nor even of the same aspect.
Lucifer. Your father saw him not?
Cain. No; 't was my mother
Who tempted him — she tempted by the serpent.
Lucifer. Good man, whene'er thy wife, or thy sons' wives,
Tempt thee or them to aught that 's new or strange,
Be sure thou seest first who hath tempted *them*.
Cain. Thy precept comes too late: there is no more
For serpents to tempt woman to.
Lucifer. But there
Are some things still which woman may tempt man to,
And man tempt woman: — let thy sons look to it!
My counsel is a kind one; for 't is even
Given chiefly at my own expense: 't is true,
'T will not be follow'd, so there 's little lost.
Cain. I understand not this.
Lucifer. The happier thou —
Thy world and thou are still too young! Thou thinkest
Thyself most wicked and unhappy: is it
Not so?
Cain. For crime, I know not; but for pain,
I have felt much.
Lucifer. First-born of the first man!
Thy present state of sin — and thou art evil,
Of sorrow — and thou sufferest, are both Eden
In all its innocence compared to what
Thou shortly may'st be; and that state again,
In its redoubled wretchedness, a Paradise
To what thy sons' sons' sons, accumulating
In generations like to dust (which they
In fact but add to), shall endure and do. —
Now let us back to earth!
Cain. And wherefore didst thou
Lead me only to inform me this?
Lucifer. Was not thy quest for knowledge?
Cain. Yes, as being
The road to happiness.
Lucifer. If truth be so,
Thou hast it.
Cain. Then my father's God did well
When he prohibited the fatal tree.
Lucifer. But had done better in not planting it.
But ignorance of evil doth not save
From evil; it must still roll on the same,
A part of all things.
Cain. Not of all things. No;
I 'll not believe it — for I thirst for good.
Lucifer. And who and what doth not? *Who* covets evil
For its own bitter sake? *None* — nothing! 't is
The leaven of all life, and lifelessness.

Cain. Within those glorious orbs which we beheld,
Distant, and dazzling, and innumerable,
Ere we came down into this phantom realm,
Ill cannot come: they are too beautiful.
Lucifer. Thou hast seen them from afar.
Cain. And what of that?
Distance can but diminish glory — they,
When nearer, must be more ineffable.
Lucifer. Approach the things of earth most beautiful,
And judge their beauty near.
Cain. I have done this —
The loveliest thing I know is loveliest nearest.
Lucifer. Then there must be delusion. — What is that,
Which being nearest to thine eyes is still
More beautiful than beauteous things remote?
Cain. My sister Adah. — All the stars of heaven,
The deep blue noon of night, lit by an orb
Which looks a spirit, or a spirit's world —
The hues of twilight — the sun's gorgeous coming —
His setting indescribable, which fills
My eyes with pleasant tears as I behold
Him sink, and feel my heart float softly with him
Along that western paradise of clouds —
The forest shade — the green bough — the bird's voice,
The vesper bird's which seems to sing of love,
And mingles with the song of cherubim,
As the day closes over Eden's walls; —
All these are nothing, to my eyes and heart,
Like Adah's face: I turn from earth and heaven
To gaze on it.
Lucifer. 'T is fair as frail mortality,
In the first dawn and bloom of young creation,
And earliest embraces of earth's parents
Can make its offspring; still it is delusion.
Cain. You think so, being not her brother.
Lucifer. Mortal!
My brotherhood 's with those who have no children.
Cain. Then thou canst have no fellowship with us.
Lucifer. It may be that thine own shall be for me.
But if thou dost possess a beautiful
Being beyond all beauty in thine eyes,
Why art thou wretched?
Cain. Why do I exist?
Why art *thou* wretched? why are all things so?
Ev'n he who made us must be, as the maker
Of things unhappy! To produce destruction
Can surely never be the task of joy,
And yet my sire says he 's omnipotent:
Then why is evil — he being good? I ask'd
This question of my father; and he said,
Because this evil only was the path
To good. Strange good, that must arise from out
Its deadly opposite. I lately saw
A lamb stung by a reptile: the poor suckling
Lay foaming on the earth, beneath the vain
And piteous bleating of its restless dam;
My father pluck'd some herbs, and laid them to
The wound: and by degrees the helpless wretch
Resumed its careless life, and rose to drain
The mother's milk, who o'er it tremulous
Stood licking its reviving limbs with joy.
Behold, my son! said Adam, how from evil
Springs good!
Lucifer. What didst thou answer?
Cain. Nothing; for
He is my father; but I thought, that 't were
A better portion for the animal
Never to have been *stung at all*, than to
Purchase renewal of its little life
With agonies unutterable, though
Dispell'd by antidotes.
Lucifer. But as thou saidst
Of all belovèd things thou lovest her
Who shared thy mother's milk, and giveth hers
Unto thy children —
Cain. Most assuredly:
What should I be without her?
Lucifer. What am I?
Cain. Dost thou love nothing?
Lucifer. What does thy God love?
Cain. All things, my father says; but I confess
I see it not in their allotment here.
Lucifer. And, therefore, thou canst not see if *I* love
Or no, except some vast and general purpose,
To which particular things must melt like snows.

Cain. Snows ! what are they ?
Lucifer. Be happier in not knowing
What thy remoter offspring must encounter;
But bask beneath the clime which knows no winter !
Cain. But dost thou not love something like thyself ?
Lucifer. And dost thou love *thyself ?*
Cain. Yes, but love more
What makes my feelings more endurable,
And is more than myself because I love it.
Lucifer. Thou lovest it, because 't is beautiful,
As was the apple in thy mother's eye;
And when it ceases to be so, thy love
Will cease, like any other appetite.
Cain. Cease to be beautiful ! how can that be ?
Lucifer. With time.
Cain. But time has past, and hitherto
Even Adam and my mother both are fair:
Not like fair Adah and the seraphim —
But very fair.
Lucifer. All that must pass away
In them and her.
Cain. I 'm sorry for it; but
Cannot conceive my love for her the less.
And when her beauty disappears, methinks
He who creates all beauty will lose more
Than me in seeing perish such a work.
Lucifer. I pity thee who lovest what must perish.
Cain. And I thee who lov'st nothing.
Lucifer. And thy brother —
Sits he not near thy heart ?
Cain. Why should he not ?
Lucifer. Thy father loves him well — so does thy God.
Cain. And so do I.
Lucifer. 'T is well and meekly done.
Cain. Meekly !
Lucifer. He is the second born of flesh,
And is his mother's favourite.
Cain. Let him keep
Her favour, since the serpent was the first
To win it.
Lucifer. And his father's ?
Cain. What is that
To me ? should I not love that which all love ?
Lucifer. And the Jehovah — the indulgent Lord
And bounteous planter of barr'd Paradise —
He, too, looks smilingly on Abel.
Cain. I
Ne'er saw him, and I know not if he smiles.
Lucifer. But you have seen his angels.
Cain. Rarely.
Lucifer. But
Sufficiently to see they love your brother:
His sacrifices are acceptable.
Cain. So be they ! wherefore speak to me of this ?
Lucifer. Because thou hast thought of this ere now.
Cain. And if
I *have* thought, why recall a thought that — (*he pauses, as agitated*) — Spirit !
Here we are in *thy* world; speak not of *mine.*
Thou hast shown me wonders; thou hast shown me those
Mighty pre-Adamites who walk'd the earth
Of which ours is the wreck; thou hast pointed out
Myriads of starry worlds, of which our own
Is the dim and remote companion, in
Infinity of life; thou hast shown me shadows
Of that existence with the dreaded name
Which my sire brought us — Death; thou hast shown me much —
But not all: show me where Jehovah dwells,
In his especial Paradise, — or *thine :*
Where is it ?
Lucifer. *Here*, and o'er all space.
Cain. But ye
Have some allotted dwelling — as all things:
Clay has its earth, and other worlds their tenants;
All temporary breathing creatures their
Peculiar element; and things which have
Long ceased to breathe *our* breath, have theirs, thou say'st;
And the Jehovah and thyself have thine —
Ye do not dwell together ?
Lucifer. No, we reign
Together; but our dwellings are asunder.
Cain. Would there were only one of ye ! perchance
An unity of purpose might make union
In elements which seem now jarr'd in storms.
How came ye, being spirits wise and infinite,
To separate ? Are ye not as brethren in
Your essence, and your nature, and your glory ?
Lucifer. Art thou not Abel's brother ?
Cain. We are brethren,
And so we shall remain; but were it not so,

Is spirit like to flesh? can it fall out —
Infinity with Immortality?
Jarring and turning space to misery —
For what?
Lucifer. To reign.
Cain. Did ye not tell me that
Ye are both eternal?
Lucifer. Yea!
Cain. And what I have seen,
Yon blue immensity, is boundless?
Lucifer. Ay.
Cain. And cannot ye both *reign* then? — is there not
Enough? — why should ye differ?
Lucifer. We *both* reign.
Cain. But one of you makes evil.
Lucifer. Which?
Cain. Thou! for
If thou canst do man good, why dost thou not?
Lucifer. And why not he who made? *I* made ye not;
Ye are *his* creatures, and not mine.
Cain. Then leave us
His creatures, as thou say'st we are, or show me
Thy dwelling, or *his* dwelling.
Lucifer. I could show thee
Both; but the time will come thou shalt see one
Of them for evermore.
Cain. And why not now?
Lucifer. Thy human mind hath scarcely grasp to gather
The little I have shown thee into calm
And clear thought; and *thou* wouldst go on aspiring
To the great double Mysteries! the *two Principles!*
And gaze upon them on their secret thrones!
Dust! limit thy ambition; for to see
Either of these, would be for thee to perish!
Cain. And let me perish, so I see them!
Lucifer. There
The son of her who snatch'd the apple spake!
But thou wouldst only perish, and not see them;
That sight is for the other state.
Cain. Of death?
Lucifer. That is the prelude.
Cain. Then I dread it less,
Now that I know it leads to something definite.
Lucifer. And now I will convey thee to thy world,
Where thou shalt multiply the race of Adam,
Eat, drink, toil, tremble, laugh, weep, sleep, and die.
Cain. And to what end have I beheld these things
Which thou hast shown me?
Lucifer. Didst thou not require
Knowledge? And have I not, in what I show'd,
Taught thee to know thyself?
Cain. Alas! I seem
Nothing
Lucifer. And this should be the human sum
Of knowledge, to know mortal nature's nothingness:
Bequeath that science to thy children, and
'T will spare them many tortures.
Cain. Haughty spirit!
Thou speak'st it proudly; but thyself, though proud,
Hast a superior.
Lucifer. No! by Heaven, which He
Holds, and the abyss, and the immensity
Of worlds and life, which I hold with him — No!
I have a victor — true; but no superior.
Homage he has from all — but none from me:
I battle it against him, as I battled
In highest heaven. Through all eternity,
And the unfathomable gulfs of Hades,
And the interminable realms of space,
And the infinity of endless ages,
All, all, will I dispute! And world by world,
And star by star, and universe by universe,
Shall tremble in the balance, till the great
Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease,
Which it ne'er shall, till he or I be quench'd!
And what can quench our immortality,
Or mutual and irrevocable hate?
He as a conqueror will call the conquer'd
Evil; but what will be the *good* he gives?
Were I the victor, *his* works would be deem'd
The only evil ones. And you, ye new
And scarce-born mortals, what have been his gifts
To you already, in your little world?

Cain. But few! and some of those but bitter.
Lucifer. Back
With me, then, to thine earth, and try the rest
Of his celestial boons to you and yours.
Evil and good are things in their own essence,
And not made good or evil by the giver;
But if he gives you good — so call him: if
Evil springs from *him*, do not name it *mine*,
Till ye know better its true fount; and judge
Not by words, though of spirits, but the fruits
Of your existence, such as it must be.
One good gift has the fatal apple given —
Your *reason:* — let it not be over-sway'd
By tyrannous threats to force you into faith
'Gainst all external sense and inward feeling:
Think and endure, and form an inner world
In your own bosom — where the outward fails;
So shall you nearer be the spiritual
Nature, and war triumphant with your own.
[*They disappear.*

ACT III

Scene I

The Earth near Eden, as in Act I.

Enter Cain *and* Adah.

Adah. Hush! tread softly, Cain.
Cain. I will; but wherefore?
Adah. Our little Enoch sleeps upon yon bed
Of leaves, beneath the cypress.
Cain. Cypress! 't is
A gloomy tree, which looks as if it mourn'd
O'er what it shadows; wherefore didst thou choose it
For our child's canopy?
Adah. Because its branches
Shut out the sun like night, and therefore seem'd
Fitting to shadow slumber.
Cain. Ay, the last —
And longest; but no matter — lead me to him.
[*They go up to the child.*
How lovely he appears! his little cheeks,
In their pure incarnation, vying with
The rose leaves strewn beneath them.
Adah. And his lips, too,
How beautifully parted! No; you shall not
Kiss him, at least not now: he will awake soon,
His hour of mid-day rest is nearly over;
But it were pity to disturb him till
'T is closed.
Cain. You have said well; I will contain
My heart till then. He smiles and sleeps! — Sleep on
And smile, thou little, young inheritor
Of a world scarce less young: sleep on, and smile!
Thine are the hours and days when both are cheering
And innocent! *thou* hast not pluck'd the fruit —
Thou know'st not that thou art naked! Must the time
Come thou shalt be amerced for sins unknown,
Which were not thine nor mine? But now sleep on!
His cheeks are reddening into deeper smiles,
And shining lids are trembling o'er his long
Lashes, dark as the cypress which waves o'er them;
Half open, from beneath them the clear blue
Laughs out, although in slumber. He must dream —
Of what? Of Paradise! — Ay! dream of it,
My disinherited boy! 'T is but a dream;
For never more thyself, thy sons, nor fathers,
Shall walk in that forbidden place of joy!
Adah. Dear Cain! Nay, do not whisper o'er our son
Such melancholy yearnings o'er the past:
Why wilt thou always mourn for Paradise?
Can we not make another?
Cain. Where?
Adah. Here, or
Where'er thou wilt: where'er thou art, I feel not
The want of this so much regretted Eden.
Have I not thee, our boy, our sire, and brother,
And Zillah — our sweet sister, and our Eve,
To whom we owe so much besides our birth?
Cain. Yes — death, too, is amongst the debts we owe her.
Adah. Cain! that proud spirit who withdrew thee hence,

Hath sadden'd thine still deeper. I had hoped
The promised wonders which thou hast beheld,
Visions, thou say'st, of past and present worlds,
Would have composed thy mind into the calm
Of a contented knowledge; but I see
Thy guide hath done thee evil: still I thank him,
And can forgive him all, that he so soon
Hath given thee back to us.
Cain. So soon?
Adah. 'T is scarcely
Two hours since ye departed: two *long* hours
To *me*, but only *hours* upon the sun.
Cain. And yet I have approach'd that sun, and seen
Worlds which he once shone on, and never more
Shall light; and worlds he never lit: methought
Years had roll'd o'er my absence.
Adah. Hardly hours.
Cain. The mind then hath capacity of time
And measures it by that which it beholds,
Pleasing or painful, little or almighty.
I had beheld the immemorial works
Of endless beings; skirr'd extinguish'd worlds;
And, gazing on eternity, methought
I had borrowed more by a few drops of ages
From its immensity; but now I feel
My littleness again. Well said the spirit,
That I was nothing!
Adah. Wherefore said he so?
Jehovah said not that.
Cain. No; *he* contents him
With making us the *nothing* which we are;
And after flattering dust with glimpses of
Eden and Immortality, resolves
It back to dust again — for what?
Adah. Thou know'st —
Even for our parents' error.
Cain. What is that
To us? they sinn'd, then *let them* die!
Adah. Thou hast not spoken well, nor is that thought
Thy own, but of the spirit who was with thee.
Would *I* could die for them, so *they* might live!
Cain. Why, so say I — provided that one victim
Might satiate the insatiable of life,
And that our little rosy sleeper there
Might never taste of death nor human sorrow,
Nor hand it down to those who spring from him.
Adah. How know we that some such atonement one day
May not redeem our race?
Cain. By sacrificing
The harmless for the guilty? what atonement
Were there? Why, *we* are innocent: what have we
Done, that we must be victims for a deed
Before our birth, or need have victims to
Atone for this mysterious, nameless sin —
If it be such a sin to seek for knowledge?
Adah. Alas! thou sinnest now, my Cain: thy words
Sound impious in mine ears.
Cain. Then leave me!
Adah. Never,
Though thy God left thee.
Cain. Say, what have we here?
Adah. Two altars, which our brother Abel made
During thine absence, whereupon to offer
A sacrifice to God on thy return.
Cain. And how knew *he*, that *I* would be so ready
With the burnt offerings, which he daily brings
With a meek brow, whose base humility
Shows more of fear than worship, as a bribe
To the Creator?
Adah. Surely, 't is well done.
Cain. One altar may suffice; *I* have no offering.
Adah. The fruits of the earth, the early beautiful
Blossom and bud, and bloom of flowers and fruits,
These are a goodly offering to the Lord,
Given with a gentle and a contrite spirit.
Cain. I have toil'd, and till'd, and sweaten in the sun
According to the curse: — must I do more?
For what should I be gentle? for a war
With all the elements ere they will yield
The bread we eat? For what must I be grateful?
For being dust, and grovelling in the dust,

Till I return to dust? If I am nothing —
For nothing shall I be an hypocrite,
And seem well-pleased with pain? For what should I
Be contrite? for my father's sin, already
Expiate with what we all have undergone,
And to be more than expiated by
The ages prophesied, upon our seed.
Little deems our young blooming sleeper there,
The germs of an eternal misery
To myriads is within him! better 't were
I snatch'd him in his sleep, and dash'd him 'gainst
The rocks, than let him live to —
Adah. Oh, my God!
Touch not the child — my child! *thy* child! Oh, Cain!
Cain. Fear not! for all the stars, and all the power
Which sways them, I would not accost yon infant
With ruder greeting than a father's kiss.
Adah. Then, why so awful in thy speech?
Cain. I said,
'T were better that he ceased to live, than give
Life to so much of sorrow as he must
Endure, and, harder still, bequeath; but since
That saying jars you, let us only say —
'T were better that he never had been born.
Adah. Oh, do not say so! Where were then the joys,
The mother's joys of watching, nourishing,
And loving him? Soft! he awakes. Sweet Enoch! [*She goes to the child.*
Oh Cain! look on him; see how full of life,
Of strength, of bloom, of beauty, and of joy,
How like to me — how like to thee, when gentle,
For *then* we are *all* alike; is 't not so, Cain?
Mother, and sire, and son, our features are
Reflected in each other; as they are
In the clear waters, when *they* are *gentle*, and
When *thou* art *gentle*. Love us, then, my Cain!
And love thyself for our sakes, for we love thee.
Look! how he laughs and stretches out his arms,
And opens wide his blue eyes upon thine,
To hail his father; while his little form
Flutters as wing'd with joy. Talk not of pain!
The childless cherubs well might envy thee
The pleasures of a parent! Bless him, Cain!
As yet he hath no words to thank thee, but
His heart will, and thine own too.
Cain. Bless thee, boy!
If that a mortal blessing may avail thee,
To save thee from the serpent's curse!
Adah. It shall.
Surely a father's blessing may avert
A reptile's subtlety.
Cain. Of that I doubt;
But bless him ne'er the less.
Adah. Our brother comes.
Cain. Thy brother Abel.

Enter ABEL.

Abel. Welcome, Cain! My brother,
The peace of God be on thee!
Cain. Abel, hail!
Abel. Our sister tells me that thou hast been wandering,
In high communion with a spirit, far
Beyond our wonted range. Was he of those
We have seen and spoken with, like to our father?
Cain. No.
Abel. Why then commune with him? he may be
A foe to the Most High.
Cain. And friend to man.
Has the Most High been so — if so you term him?
Abel. *Term him!* your words are strange to-day, my brother.
My sister Adah, leave us for awhile —
We mean to sacrifice.
Adah. Farewell, my Cain;
But first embrace thy son. May his soft spirit,
And Abel's pious ministry, recall thee
To peace and holiness!
[*Exit* ADAH, *with her child.*
Abel. Where hast thou been?
Cain. I know not.
Abel. Nor what thou hast seen?
Cain. The dead,
The immortal, the unbounded, the omnipotent,
The overpowering mysteries of space —

The innumerable worlds that were and are —
A whirlwind of such overwhelming things,
Suns, moons, and earths, upon their loud-voiced spheres
Singing in thunder round me, as have made me
Unfit for mortal converse: leave me, Abel.
Abel. Thine eyes are flashing with unnatural light,
Thy cheek is flush'd with an unnatural hue,
Thy words are fraught with an unnatural sound —
What may this mean ?
Cain. It means — I pray thee, leave me.
Abel. Not till we have pray'd and sacrificed together.
Cain. Abel, I pray thee, sacrifice alone —
Jehovah loves thee well.
Abel. *Both* well, I hope.
Cain. But thee the better: I care not for that;
Thou art fitter for his worship than I am;
Revere him, then — but let it be alone —
At least, without me.
Abel. Brother, I should ill
Deserve the name of our great father's son,
If, as my elder, I revered thee not,
And in the worship of our God call'd not
On thee to join me, and precede me in
Our priesthood — 't is thy place.
Cain. But I have ne'er
Asserted it.
Abel. The more my grief; I pray thee
To do so now: thy soul seems labouring in
Some strong delusion; it will calm thee.
Cain. No;
Nothing can calm me more. *Calm!* say I ? Never
Knew I what calm was in the soul, although
I have seen the elements still'd. My Abel, leave me !
Or let me leave thee to thy pious purpose.
Abel. Neither; we must perform our task together.
Spurn me not.
Cain. If it must be so — well, then,
What shall I do ?
Abel. Choose one of those two altars.
Cain. Choose for me: they to me are so much turf
And stone.
Abel. Choose thou !
Cain. I have chosen.
Abel. 'T is the highest,
And suits thee, as the elder. Now prepare
Thine offerings.
Cain. Where are thine ?
Abel. Behold them here,
The firstlings of the flock, and fat thereof —
A shepherd's humble offering.
Cain. I have no flocks;
I am a tiller of the ground, and must
Yield what it yieldeth to my toil — its fruit: [*He gathers fruits.*
Behold them in their various bloom and ripeness.
[*They dress their altars, and kindle a flame upon them.*
Abel. My brother, as the elder, offer first
Thy prayer and thanksgiving with sacrifice.
Cain. No — I am new to this; lead thou the way,
And I will follow — as I may.
Abel (*kneeling*). Oh God !
Who made us, and who breathed the breath of life
Within our nostrils, who hath blessèd us,
And spared, despite our father's sin, to make
His children all lost, as they might have been,
Had not thy justice been so temper'd with
The mercy which is thy delight as to
Accord a pardon like a Paradise
Compared with our great crimes: — Sole Lord of light !
Of good, and glory, and eternity;
Without whom all were evil, and with whom
Nothing can err, except to some good end
Of thine omnipotent benevolence —
Inscrutable, but still to be fulfill'd —
Accept from out thy humble first of shepherd's
First of the first-born flocks — an offering,
In itself nothing — as what offering can be
Aught unto thee ? but yet accept it for
The thanksgiving of him who spreads it in
The face of thy high heaven, bowing his own
Even to the dust, of which he is, in honour
Of thee, and of thy name, for evermore !
Cain (*standing erect during this speech*). Spirit ! whate'er or whosoe'er thou art,
Omnipotent, it may be — and, if good,
Shown in the exemption of thy deeds from evil;
Jehovah upon earth ! and God in heaven !

And it may be with other names, because
Thine attributes seem many, as thy works —
If thou must be propitiated with prayers,
Take them! If thou must be induced with altars,
And soften'd with a sacrifice, receive them!
Two beings here erect them unto thee.
If thou lov'st blood, the shepherd's shrine, which smokes
On my right hand, hath shed it for thy service
In the first of his flock whose limbs now reek
In sanguinary incense to thy skies;
Or if the sweet and blooming fruits of earth
And milder seasons, which the unstain'd turf
I spread them on now offers in the face
Of the broad sun which ripen'd them, may seem
Good to thee, inasmuch as they have not
Suffer'd in limb or life, and rather form
A sample of thy works than supplication
To look on ours! If a shrine without victim,
And altar without gore, may win thy favour,
Look on it! and for him who dresseth it,
He is — such as thou mad'st him; and seeks nothing
Which must be won by kneeling; if he's evil,
Strike him! thou art omnipotent and may'st —
For what can he oppose? If he be good,
Strike him, or spare him, as thou wilt! since all
Rests upon thee; and good and evil seem
To have no power themselves, save in thy will;
And whether that be good or ill I know not,
Not being omnipotent, nor fit to judge
Omnipotence, but merely to endure
Its mandate; which thus far I have endured.

[*The fire upon the altar of* ABEL *kindles into a column of the brightest flame, and ascends to heaven; while a whirlwind throws down the altar of* CAIN, *and scatters the fruits abroad upon the earth.*

Abel (*kneeling*). Oh, brother, pray! Jehovah's wroth with thee.
Cain. Why so?
Abel. Thy fruits are scatter'd on the earth.
Cain. From earth they came, to earth let them return;
Their seed will bear fresh fruit there ere the summer:
Thy burnt flesh-off'ring prospers better; see
How heav'n licks up the flames when thick with blood!
Abel. Think not upon my offering's acceptance,
But make another of thine own before
It is too late.
Cain. I will build no more altars,
Nor suffer any.
Abel (*rising*). Cain! what meanest thou?
Cain. To cast down yon vile flatt'rer of the clouds,
The smoky harbinger of thy dull pray'rs —
Thine altar, with its blood of lambs and kids,
Which fed on milk, to be destroy'd in blood.
Abel (*opposing him*). Thou shalt not: — add not impious works to impious
Words! let that altar stand — 't is hallow'd now
By the immortal pleasure of Jehovah,
In his acceptance of the victims.
Cain. *His!*
His pleasure! what was his high pleasure in
The fumes of scorching flesh and smoking blood,
To the pain of the bleating mothers which
Still yearn for their dead offspring? or the pangs
Of the sad ignorant victims underneath
Thy pious knife? Give way! this bloody record
Shall not stand in the sun, to shame creation!
Abel. Brother, give back! thou shalt not touch my altar
With violence: if that thou wilt adopt it,
To try another sacrifice, 't is thine.
Cain. Another sacrifice! Give way, or else
That sacrifice may be —
Abel. What mean'st thou?
Cain. Give —
Give way! — thy God loves blood! — then look to it:
Give way, ere he hath *more!*
Abel. In *his* great name,
I stand between thee and the shrine which hath
Had his acceptance.
Cain. If thou lov'st thyself,

Stand back till I have strew'd this turf along
Its native soil: — else —
Abel (*opposing him*). I love God far more
Than life.
Cain (*striking him with a brand, on the temples, which he snatches from the altar*). Then take thy life unto thy God,
Since he loves lives.
Abel (*falls*). What hast thou done, my brother?
Cain. Brother!
Abel. Oh, God! receive thy servant, and
Forgive his slayer, for he knew not what
He did — Cain, give me — give me thy hand; and tell
Poor Zillah —
Cain (*after a moment's stupefaction*). *My* hand! 't is all red, and with —
What? [*A long pause.* — *Looking slowly round.*
Where am I? alone! Where 's Abel? where
Cain? Can it be that I am he? My brother,
Awake! — why liest thou so on the green earth?
'T is not the hour of slumber: — why so pale?
What hast thou! — thou wert full of life this morn!
Abel! I pray thee, mock me not! I smote
Too fiercely, but not fatally. Ah, why
Wouldst thou oppose me? This is mockery;
And only done to daunt me: — 't was a blow —
And but a blow. Stir — stir — nay, only stir!
Why, so — that 's well — thou breath'st! breathe upon me!
Oh God! Oh God!
Abel (*very faintly*). What 's he who speaks of God?
Cain. Thy murderer.
Abel. Then may God forgive him! Cain,
Comfort poor Zillah: — she has but one brother
Now. [ABEL *dies*.
Cain. And I none! — Who makes me brotherless?
His eyes are open! then he is not dead!
Death is like sleep, and sleep shuts down our lids.
His lips, too, are apart; why then he breathes!
And yet I feel it not. — His heart! his heart!
Let me see, doth it beat? methinks — No! — no!
This is a vision, else I am become
The native of another and worse world.
The earth swims round me: — what is this? — 't is wet;
[*Puts his hand to his brow, and then looks at it.*
And yet there are no dews! 'T is blood — my blood —
My brother's and my own, and shed by me!
Then what have I further to do with life,
Since I have taken life from my own flesh?
But he cannot be dead! — Is silence death?
No; he will wake; then let me watch by him.
Life cannot be so slight, as to be quench'd
Thus quickly! — he hath spoken to me since —
What shall I say to him? — My brother! No:
He will not answer to that name; for brethren
Smite not each other. Yet — yet — speak to me.
Oh, for a word more of that gentle voice,
That I may bear to hear my own again!

Enter ZILLAH.

Zillah. I heard a heavy sound; what can it be?
'T is Cain; and watching by my husband. What
Dost thou there, brother? Doth he sleep? Oh, heav'n!
What means this paleness, and yon stream? — No, no!
It is not blood; for who would shed his blood?
Abel! what 's this? — who hath done this? He moves not;
He breathes not; and his hands drop down from mine
With stony lifelessness! Ah, cruel Cain!
Why cam'st thou not in time to save him from
This violence? Whatever hath assail'd him,
Thou wert the stronger, and shouldst have stepp'd in
Between him and aggression! Father! — Eve! —
Adah! — come hither! Death is in the world!
[*Exit* ZILLAH, *calling on her Parents, etc.*

Cain (*solus*). And who hath brought him there? — I — who abhor
The name of Death so deeply, that the thought
Empoison'd all my life before I knew
His aspect — I have led him here, and giv'n
My brother to his cold and still embrace,
As if he would not have asserted his
Inexorable claim without my aid.
I am awake at last — a dreary dream
Had madden'd me; — but *he* shall ne'er awake!

Enter ADAM, EVE, ADAH, *and* ZILLAH.

Adam. A voice of woe from Zillah brings me here.
What do I see? — 'T is true! — My son! my son!
Woman, behold the serpent's work, and thine! [*To* EVE.
Eve. Oh! speak not of it now; the serpent's fangs
Are in my heart. My best beloved, Abel!
Jehovah! this is punishment beyond
A mother's sin, to take *him* from me!
Adam. Who,
Or what hath done this deed? — speak, Cain, since thou
Wert present; was it some more hostile angel,
Who walks not with Jehovah? or some wild
Brute of the forest?
Eve. Ah! a livid light
Breaks through, as from a thunder-cloud! yon brand,
Massy and bloody! snatch'd from off the altar,
And black with smoke, and red with —
Adam. Speak, my son!
Speak, and assure us, wretched as we are,
That we are not more miserable still.
Adah. Speak, Cain! and say it was not *thou!*
Eve. It was,
I see it now — he hangs his guilty head,
And covers his ferocious eye with hands
Incarnadine.
Adah. Mother, thou dost him wrong —
Cain! clear thee from this horrible accusal,
Which grief wrings from our parent.
Eve. Hear, Jehovah!
May the eternal serpent's curse be on him!
For he was fitter for his seed than ours.
May all his days be desolate! May —
Adah. Hold!
Curse him not, mother, for he is thy son —
Curse him not, mother, for he is my brother,
And my betroth'd.
Eve. He hath left thee no brother —
Zillah no husband — me *no son!* — for thus
I curse him from my sight for evermore!
All bonds I break between us, as he broke
That of his nature, in yon — Oh death! death!
Why didst thou not take *me*, who first incurr'd thee?
Why dost thou not so now?
Adam. Eve! let not this,
Thy natural grief, lead to impiety!
A heavy doom was long forespoken to us;
And now that it begins, let it be borne
In such sort as may show our God that we
Are faithful servants to his holy will.
Eve (*pointing to Cain*). *His will!* the will of yon incarnate spirit
Of death, whom I have brought upon the earth
To strew it with the dead. May all the curses
Of life be on him! and his agonies
Drive him forth o'er the wilderness, like us
From Eden, till his children do by him
As he did by his brother! May the swords
And wings of fiery cherubim pursue him
By day and night — snakes spring up in his path —
Earth's fruits be ashes in his mouth — the leaves
On which he lays his head to sleep be strew'd
With scorpions! May his dreams be of his victim!
His waking a continual dread of death!
May the clear rivers turn to blood as he
Stoops down to stain them with his raging lip!
May every element shun or change to him!
May he live in the pangs which others die with!
And death itself wax something worse than death
To him who first acquainted him with man!
Hence, fratricide! henceforth that word is *Cain*,
Through all the coming myriads of mankind,

Who shall abhor thee though thou wert their sire!
May the grass wither from thy feet! the woods
Deny thee shelter! earth a home! the dust
A grave! the sun his light! and heaven her God! [*Exit* Eve.
Adam. Cain! get thee forth: we dwell no more together.
Depart and leave the dead to me — I am
Henceforth alone — we never must meet more.
Adah. Oh, part not with him thus, my father: do not
Add thy deep curse to Eve's upon his head!
Adam. I curse him not: his spirit be his curse.
Come, Zillah!
Zillah. I must watch my husband's corse.
Adam. We will return again, when he is gone
Who hath provided for us this dread office.
Come, Zillah!
Zillah. Yet one kiss on yon pale clay,
And those lips once so warm — my heart! my heart!
[*Exeunt* Adam *and* Zillah, *weeping*.
Adah. Cain! thou hast heard, we must go forth. I am ready,
So shall our children be. I will bear Enoch,
And you his sister. Ere the sun declines
Let us depart, nor walk the wilderness
Under the cloud of night. — Nay, speak to me,
To *me* — *thine own*.
Cain. Leave me!
Adah. Why, all have left thee.
Cain. And wherefore lingerest thou? Dost thou not fear
To dwell with one who hath done this?
Adah. I fear
Nothing except to leave thee, much as I
Shrink from the deed which leaves thee brotherless.
I must not speak of this — it is between thee
And the great God.
A Voice from within exclaims, Cain! Cain!
Adah. Hear'st thou that voice?
The Voice within. Cain! Cain!
Adah. It soundeth like an angel's tone.

Enter the Angel *of the Lord.*

Angel. Where is thy brother Abel?
Cain. Am I then
My brother's keeper?
Angel. Cain! what hast thou done?
The voice of thy slain brother's blood cries out,
Even from the ground, unto the Lord! — Now art thou
Cursed from the earth, which open'd late her mouth
To drink thy brother's blood from thy rash hand.
Henceforth, when thou shalt till the ground, it shall not
Yield thee her strength; a fugitive shalt thou
Be from this day, and vagabond on earth!
Adah. This punishment is more than he can bear.
Behold, thou drivest him from the face of earth,
And from the face of God shall he be hid.
A fugitive and vagabond on earth,
'T will come to pass, that whoso findeth him
Shall slay him.
Cain. Would they could! but who are they
Shall slay me? Where are these on the lone earth
As yet unpeopled?
Angel. Thou hast slain thy brother,
And who shall warrant thee against thy son?
Adah. Angel of Light! be merciful, nor say
That this poor aching breast now nourishes
A murderer in my boy, and of his father.
Angel. Then he would but be what his father is.
Did not the milk of Eve give nutriment
To him thou now see'st so besmear'd with blood?
The fratricide might well engender parricides. —
But it shall not be so — the Lord thy God
And mine commandeth me to set his seal
On Cain, so that he may go forth in safety.
Who slayeth Cain, a sevenfold vengeance shall
Be taken on his head. Come hither!
Cain. What
Wouldst thou with me?
Angel. To mark upon thy brow
Exemption from such deeds as thou hast done.

Cain. No, let me die!
Angel. It must not be.
[*The* Angel *sets the mark on* Cain's *brow.*
Cain. It burns
My brow, but nought to that which is within it.
Is there more? let me meet it as I may.
Angel. Stern hast thou been and stubborn from the womb,
As the ground thou must henceforth till; but he
Thou slew'st was gentle as the flocks he tended.
Cain. After the fall too soon was I begotten;
Ere yet my mother's mind subsided from
The serpent, and my sire still mourn'd for Eden.
That which I am, I am; I did not seek
For life, nor did I make myself; but could I
With my own death redeem him from the dust —
And why not so? let him return to-day,
And I lie ghastly! so shall be restored
By God the life to him he loved; and taken
From me a being I ne'er loved to bear.
Angel. Who shall heal murder? what is done is done;
Go forth! fulfil thy days! and be thy deeds
Unlike the last! [*The* Angel *disappears.*
Adah. He 's gone, let us go forth;
I hear our little Enoch cry within
Our bower.
Cain. Ah, little knows he what he weeps for!
And I who have shed blood cannot shed tears!
But the four rivers would not cleanse my soul.
Think'st thou my boy will bear to look on me?
Adah. If I thought that he would not, I would —
Cain (*interrupting her*). No,
No more of threats: we have had too many of them:
Go to our children; I will follow thee.
Adah. I will not leave thee lonely with the dead;
Let us depart together.
Cain. Oh, thou dead
And everlasting witness! whose unsinking
Blood darkens earth and heaven! what thou *now* art
I know not! but if *thou* see'st what *I* am,
I think thou wilt forgive him, whom his God
Can ne'er forgive, nor his own soul. — Farewell!
I must not, dare not touch what I have made thee.
I, who sprung from the same womb with thee, drain'd
The same breast, clasp'd thee often to my own,
In fondness brotherly and boyish, I
Can never meet thee more, nor even dare
To do that for thee, which thou shouldst have done
For me — compose thy limbs into their grave —
The first grave yet dug for mortality.
But who hath dug that grave? Oh, earth! Oh, earth!
For all the fruits thou hast render'd to me, I
Give thee back this. — Now for the wilderness.
[Adah *stoops down and kisses the body of* Abel.
Adah. A dreary, and an early doom, my brother,
Has been thy lot! Of all who mourn for thee,
I alone must not weep. My office is
Henceforth to dry up tears, and not to shed them:
But yet, of all who mourn, none mourn like me,
Not only for thyself, but him who slew thee.
Now, Cain! I will divide thy burden with thee.
Cain. Eastward from Eden will we take our way;
'T is the most desolate, and suits my steps.
Adah. Lead! thou shalt be my guide, and may our God
Be thine! Now let us carry forth our children.
Cain. And *he* who lieth there was childless. I
Have dried the fountain of a gentle race,
Which might have graced his recent marriage couch,
And might have temper'd this stern blood of mine,
Uniting with our children Abel's offspring!
O Abel!
Adah. Peace be with him!
Cain. But with *me!* —
[*Exeunt.*

HEAVEN AND EARTH

A MYSTERY

FOUNDED ON THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE IN GENESIS, CHAP. VI.

'And it came to pass . . . that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.'

> 'And woman wailing for her demon lover.'
> COLERIDGE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ANGELS
SAMIASA.
AZAZIEL.
RAPHAEL, the Archangel

MEN
NOAH and his Sons.
IRAD.
JAPHET.

WOMEN
ANAH.
AHOLIBAMAH.

Chorus of Spirits of the Earth.—Chorus of Mortals.

PART I

SCENE I

A woody and mountainous district near Mount Ararat.—Time, midnight.

Enter ANAH *and* AHOLIBAMAH.

Anah. Our father sleeps: it is the hour when they
Who love us are accustom'd to descend
Through the deep clouds o'er rocky Ararat:—
How my heart beats!
Aho. Let us proceed upon
Our invocation.
Anah. But the stars are hidden.
I tremble.
Aho. So do I, but not with fear
Of aught save their delay.
Anah. My sister, though
I love Azaziel more than—oh, too much!
What was I going to say? my heart grows impious.
Aho. And where is the impiety of loving
Celestial natures?
Anah. But, Aholibamah,
I love our God less since his angel loved me:
This cannot be of good: and though I know not
That I do wrong, I feel a thousand fears
Which are not ominous of right.
Aho. Then wed thee
Unto some son of clay, and toil and spin!
There 's Japhet loves thee well, hath loved thee long:
Marry, and bring forth dust!
Anah. I should have loved
Azaziel not less, were he mortal; yet
I am glad he is not. I can not outlive him.
And when I think that his immortal wings
Will one day hover o'er the sepulchre
Of the poor child of clay which so adored him,
As he adores the Highest, death becomes
Less terrible; but yet I pity him:
His grief will be of ages, or at least
Mine would be such for him, were I the seraph,
And he the perishable.
Aho. Rather say,
That he will single forth some other daughter
Of Earth, and love her as he once loved Anah.
Anah. And if it should be so, and she loved him,
Better thus than that he should weep for me.
Aho. If I thought thus of Samiasa's love,
All seraph as he is, I 'd spurn him from me.
But to our invocation!—'T is the hour.
Anah. Seraph!
From thy sphere!
Whatever star contain thy glory:
In the eternal depths of heaven
Albeit thou watchest with 'the seven,'
Though through space infinite and hoary
Before thy bright wings worlds be driven,
Yet hear!
Oh! think of her who holds thee dear!
And though she nothing is to thee,
Yet think that thou art all to her.
Thou canst not tell,—and never be
Such pangs decreed to aught save me,—
The bitterness of tears.
Eternity is in thine years,
Unborn, undying beauty in thine eyes;
With me thou canst not sympathise,
Except in love, and there thou must
Acknowledge that more loving dust
Ne'er wept beneath the skies.
Thou walk'st thy many worlds, thou seest
The face of him who made thee great,

As he hath made me of the least
Of those cast out from Eden's gate:
Yet, Seraph dear!
Oh hear!
For thou hast loved me, and I would not die
Until I know what I must die in knowing,
That thou forget'st in thine eternity
Her whose heart death could not keep from overflowing
For thee, immortal essence as thou art!
Great is their love who love in sin and fear;
And such, I feel, are waging in my heart
A war unworthy: to an Adamite
Forgive, my Seraph! that such thoughts appear,
For sorrow is our element;
Delight
An Eden kept afar from sight,
Though sometimes with our visions blent.
The hour is near
Which tells me we are not abandon'd quite.—
Appear! Appear!
Seraph!
My own Azaziel! be but here,
And leave the stars to their own light.
Aho. Samiasa!
Wheresoe'er
Thou rulest in the upper air—
Or warring with the spirits who may dare
Dispute with him
Who made all empires, empire; or recalling
Some wandering star, which shoots through the abyss,
Whose tenants dying, while their world is falling,
Share the dim destiny of clay in this;
Or joining with the inferior cherubim,
Thou deignest to partake their hymn—
Samiasa!
I call thee, I await thee, and I love thee.
Many may worship thee, that will I not;
If that thy spirit down to mine may move thee,
Descend and share my lot!
Though I be form'd of clay,
And thou of beams
More bright than those of day
On Eden's streams,
Thine immortality can not repay
With love more warm than mine
My love. There is a ray
In me, which, though forbidden yet to shine,
I feel was lighted at thy God's and thine.
It may be hidden long: death and decay
Our mother Eve bequeath'd us — but my heart
Defies it: though this life must pass away,
Is *that* a cause for thee and me to part?
Thou art immortal — so am I: I feel —
I feel my immortality o'ersweep
All pains, all tears, all fears, and peal,
Like the eternal thunders of the deep,
Into my ears this truth — 'Thou liv'st for ever!'
But if it be in joy
I know not, nor would know;
That secret rests with the Almighty giver
Who folds in clouds the fonts of bliss and woe,
But thee and me he never can destroy;
Change us he may, but not o'erwhelm; we are
Of as eternal essence, and must war
With him if he will war with us: with *thee*
I can share all things, even immortal sorrow;
For thou hast ventured to share life with *me*,
And shall *I* shrink from thine eternity?
No! though the serpent's sting should pierce me thorough,
And thou thyself wert like the serpent, coil
Around me still! and I will smile,
And curse thee not; but hold
Thee in as warm a fold
As — but descend, and prove
A mortal's love
For an immortal. If the skies contain
More joy than thou canst give and take, remain!
Anah. Sister! sister! I view them winging
Their bright way through the parted night.
Aho. The clouds from off their pinions flinging,
As though they bore to-morrow's light.
Anah. But if our father see the sight!
Aho. He would but deem it was the moon
Rising unto some sorcerer's tune
An hour too soon.

Anah. They come! *he* comes! — Azaziel!
Aho. Haste
To meet them! Oh, for wings to bear
My spirit, while they hover there,
To Samiasa's breast!
Anah. Lo! they have kindled all the west,
Like a returning sunset; — lo!
On Ararat's late secret crest
A mild and many-colour'd bow,
The remnant of their flashing path,
Now shines! and now, behold! it hath
Return'd to night, as rippling foam,
Which the leviathan hath lash'd
From his unfathomable home
When sporting on the face of the calm deep,
Subsides soon after he again hath dash'd
Down, down, to where the ocean's fountains sleep.
Aho. They have touch'd earth! Samiasa!
Anah. My Azaziel!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

Enter IRAD *and* JAPHET.

Irad. Despond not: wherefore wilt thou wander thus
To add thy silence to the silent night,
And lift thy tearful eye unto the stars?
They cannot aid thee.
Japh. But they soothe me — now
Perhaps she looks upon them as I look.
Methinks a being that is beautiful
Becometh more so as it looks on beauty,
The eternal beauty of undying things.
Oh, Anah!
Irad. But she loves thee not.
Japh. Alas!
Irad. And proud Aholibamah spurns me also.
Japh. I feel for thee too.
Irad. Let her keep her pride,
Mine hath enabled me to bear her scorn:
It may be, time too will avenge it.
Japh. Canst thou
Find joy in such a thought?
Irad. Nor joy, nor sorrow.
I loved her well; I would have loved her better,
Had love been met with love: as 'tis, I leave her
To brighter destinies, if so she deems them.
Japh. What destinies?
Irad. I have some cause to think
She loves another.
Japh. Anah!
Irad. No; her sister.
Japh. What other?
Irad. That I know not; but her air,
If not her words, tells me she loves another.
Japh. Ay, but not Anah: she but loves her God.
Irad. Whate'er she loveth, so she loves thee not,
What can it profit thee?
Japh. True, nothing; but
I love.
Irad. And so did I.
Japh. And now thou lov'st not,
Or think'st thou lov'st not, art thou happier?
Irad. Yes.
Japh. I pity thee.
Irad. Me! why?
Japh. For being happy,
Deprived of that which makes my misery.
Irad. I take thy taunt as part of thy distemper,
And would not feel as thou dost for more shekels
Than all our father's herds would bring if weigh'd
Against the metal of the sons of Cain —
The yellow dust they try to barter with us,
As if such useless and discolour'd trash,
The refuse of the earth, could be received
For milk, and wool, and flesh, and fruits, and all
Our flocks and wilderness afford. — Go, Japhet,
Sigh to the stars, as wolves howl to the moon —
I must back to my rest.
Japh. And so would I
If I could rest.
Irad. Thou wilt not to our tents then?
Japh. No, Irad; I will to the cavern, whose
Mouth they say opens from the internal world
To let the inner spirits of the earth
Forth when they walk its surface.
Irad. Wherefore so?
What wouldst thou there?
Japh. Soothe further my sad spirit
With gloom as sad: it is a hopeless spot,
And I am hopeless.
Irad. But 'tis dangerous;

Strange sounds and sights have peopled it with terrors.
I must go with thee.
Japh. Irad, no; believe me
I feel no evil thought, and fear no evil.
Irad. But evil things will be thy foe the more
As not being of them: turn thy steps aside,
Or let mine be with thine.
Japh. No, neither, Irad;
I must proceed alone.
Irad. Then peace be with thee!
[*Exit* Irad.

Japh. (*solus*). Peace! I have sought it where it should be found,
In love — with love, too, which perhaps deserved it;
And in its stead a heaviness of heart,
A weakness of the spirit, listless days,
And nights inexorable to sweet sleep,
Have come upon me. Peace! what peace? the calm
Of desolation, and the stillness of
The untrodden forest, only broken by
The sweeping tempest through its groaning boughs;
Such is the sullen or the fitful state
Of my mind overworn. The earth 's grown wicked,
And many signs and portents have proclaim'd
A change at hand, and an o'erwhelming doom
To perishable beings. Oh, my Anah!
When the dread hour denounced shall open wide
The fountains of the deep, how mightest thou
Have lain within this bosom, folded from
The elements; this bosom, which in vain
Hath beat for thee, and then will beat more vainly,
While thine — Oh, God! at least remit to her
Thy wrath! for she is pure amidst the failing
As a star in the clouds, which cannot quench,
Although they obscure it for an hour. My Anah!
How would I have adored thee, but thou wouldst not;
And still would I redeem thee — see thee live
When ocean is earth's grave, and, unopposed
By rock or shallow, the leviathan,
Lord of the shoreless sea and watery world,
Shall wonder at his boundlessness of realm.
[*Exit* Japhet.

Enter Noah *and* Shem.

Noah. Where is thy brother Japhet?
Shem. He went forth,
According to his wont, to meet with Irad,
He said; but, as I fear, to bend his steps
Towards Anah's tents, round which he hovers nightly,
Like a dove round and round its pillaged nest;
Or else he walks the wild up to the cavern
Which opens to the heart of Ararat.
Noah. What doth he there? It is an evil spot
Upon an earth all evil; for things worse
Than even wicked men resort there: he
Still loves this daughter of a fated race,
Although he could not wed her if she loved him,
And that she doth not. Oh, the unhappy hearts
Of men! that one of my blood, knowing well
The destiny and evil of these days,
And that the hour approacheth, should indulge
In such forbidden yearnings! Lead the way;
He must be sought for!
Shem. Go not forward, father:
I will seek Japhet.
Noah. Do not fear for me:
All evil things are powerless on the man
Selected by Jehovah. — Let us on.
Shem. To the tents of the father of the sisters?
Noah. No; to the cavern of the Caucasus.
[*Exeunt* Noah *and* Shem.

Scene III

The mountains. — A cavern, and the rocks of Caucasus.

Japh. (*solus*). Ye wilds, that look eternal; and thou cave,
Which seem'st unfathomable; and ye mountains,
So varied and so terrible in beauty;
Here, in your rugged majesty of rocks
And toppling trees that twine their roots with stone
In perpendicular places, where the foot

Of man would tremble, could he reach them — yes,
Ye look eternal! Yet, in a few days,
Perhaps even hours, ye will be changed, rent, hurl'd
Before the mass of waters; and yon cave,
Which seems to lead into a lower world,
Shall have its depths search'd by the sweeping wave,
And dolphins gambol in the lion's den!
And man — Oh, men! my fellow-beings! Who
Shall weep above your universal grave,
Save I? Who shall be left to weep? My kinsmen,
Alas! what am I better than ye are,
That I must live beyond ye? Where shall be
The pleasant places where I thought of Anah
While I had hope? or the more savage haunts,
Scarce less beloved, where I despair'd for her?
And can it be! — Shall yon exulting peak,
Whose glittering top is like a distant star,
Lie low beneath the boiling of the deep?
No more to have the morning sun break forth,
And scatter back the mists in floating folds
From its tremendous brow? no more to have
Day's broad orb drop behind its head at even,
Leaving it with a crown of many hues?
No more to be the beacon of the world,
For angels to alight on, as the spot
Nearest the stars? And can those words '*no more*'
Be meant for thee, for all things, save for us,
And the predestined creeping things reserved
By my sire to Jehovah's bidding? May
He preserve *them*, and *I not* have the power
To snatch the loveliest of earth's daughters from
A doom which even some serpent, with his mate,
Shall 'scape to save his kind to be prolong'd,
To hiss and sting through some emerging world,
Reeking and dank from out the slime, whose ooze
Shall slumber o'er the wreck of this until
The salt morass subside into a sphere
Beneath the sun, and be the monument,
The sole and undistinguish'd sepulchre,
Of yet quick myriads of all life? How much
Breath will be still'd at once! All beauteous world!
So young, so mark'd out for destruction, I
With a cleft heart look on thee day by day,
And night by night, thy number'd days and nights.
I cannot save thee, cannot save even her
Whose love had made me love thee more; but as
A portion of thy dust, I cannot think
Upon thy coming doom without a feeling
Such as — Oh God! and canst thou —

[*He pauses.*

A rushing sound from the cavern is heard, and shouts of laughter — afterwards a Spirit passes.

Japh. In the name
Of the Most High, what art thou?
Spirit (*laughs*). Ha! ha! ha!
Japh. By all that earth holds holiest, speak!
Spirit (*laughs*). Ha! ha!
Japh. By the approaching deluge! by the earth
Which will be strangled by the ocean! by
The deep which will lay open all her fountains!
The heaven which will convert her clouds to seas,
And the Omnipotent who makes and crushes!
Thou unknown, terrible, and indistinct,
Yet awful Thing of Shadows, speak to me!
Why dost thou laugh that horrid laugh?
Spirit. Why weep'st thou?
Japh. For earth and all her children.
Spirit. Ha! ha! ha! [*Spirit vanishes.*
Japh. How the fiend mocks the tortures of a world,
The coming desolation of an orb,
On which the sun shall rise and warm no life!
How the earth sleeps! and all that in it is
Sleep too upon the very eve of death!
Why should they wake to meet it? What are here,
Which look like death in life, and speak like things
Born ere this dying world? They come like clouds!

[*Various Spirits pass from the cavern.*

Spirit. Rejoice!
The abhorrèd race
Which could not keep in Eden their high place,
But listen'd to the voice
Of knowledge without power,
Are nigh the hour
Of death!
Not slow, not single, not by sword, nor sorrow,
Nor years, nor heart-break, nor time's sapping motion,
Shall they drop off. Behold their last to-morrow!
Earth shall be ocean!
And no breath,
Save of the winds, be on the unbounded wave!
Angels shall tire their wings, but find no spot:
Not even a rock from out the liquid grave
Shall lift its point to save,
Or show the place where strong Despair hath died,
After long looking o'er the ocean wide
For the expected ebb which cometh not:
All shall be void,
Destroy'd!
Another element shall be the lord
Of life, and the abhorr'd
Children of dust be quench'd; and of each hue
Of earth nought left but the unbroken blue;
And of the variegated mountain
Shall nought remain
Unchanged, or of the level plain;
Cedar and pine shall lift their tops in vain:
All merged within the universal fountain,
Man, earth, and fire, shall die,
And sea and sky
Look vast and lifeless in the eternal eye.
Upon the foam
Who shall erect a home?
Japh. (*coming forward*). My sire!
Earth's seed shall not expire;
Only the evil shall be put away
From day.
Avaunt! ye exulting demons of the waste!
Who howl your hideous joy
When God destroys whom you dare not destroy;
Hence! haste!
Back to your inner caves!
Until the waves
Shall search you in your secret place.
And drive your sullen race
Forth, to be roll'd upon the tossing winds
In restless wretchedness along all space!
Spirit. Son of the saved!
When thou and thine have braved
The wide and warring element;
When the great barrier of the deep is rent,
Shall thou and thine be good or happy? — No!
Thy new world and new race shall be of woe —
Less goodly in their aspect, in their years
Less than the glorious giants, who
Yet walk the world in pride,
The Sons of Heaven by many a mortal bride.
Thine shall be nothing of the past, save tears.
And art thou not ashamed
Thus to survive,
And eat, and drink, and wive?
With a base heart so far subdued and tamed,
As even to hear this wide destruction named,
Without such grief and courage, as should rather
Bid thee await the world-dissolving wave,
Than seek a shelter with thy favour'd father,
And build thy city o'er the drown'd earth's grave?
Who would outlive their kind,
Except the base and blind?
Mine
Hateth thine
As of a different order in the sphere,
But not our own.
There is not one who hath not left a throne
Vacant in heaven to dwell in darkness here,
Rather than see his mates endure alone.
Go, wretch! and give
A life like thine to other wretches — live!
And when the annihilating waters roar
Above what they have done,
Envy the giant patriarchs then no more,
And scorn thy sire as the surviving one!
Thyself for being his son!

Chorus of Spirits issuing from the cavern.

Rejoice!
No more the human voice
Shall vex our joys in middle air
With prayer;
No more
Shall they adore;
And we, who ne'er for ages have adored
The prayer-exacting Lord,
To whom the omission of a sacrifice
Is vice;
We, we shall view the deep's salt sources pour'd
Until one element shall do the work
Of all in chaos; until they,
The creatures proud of their poor clay,
Shall perish, and their bleachèd bones shall lurk
In caves, in dens, in clefts of mountains, where
The deep shall follow to their latest lair;
Where even the brutes, in their despair,
Shall cease to prey on man and on each other,
And the striped tiger shall lie down to die
Beside the lamb, as though he were his brother;
Till all things shall be as they were,
Silent and uncreated, save the sky:
While a brief truce
Is made with Death, who shall forbear
The little remnant of the past creation,
To generate new nations for his use:
This remnant, floating o'er the undulation
Of the subsiding deluge, from its slime,
When the hot sun hath baked the reeking soil
Into a world, shall give again to Time
New beings — years — diseases — sorrow — crime —
With all companionship of hate and toil,
Until —

Japh. (interrupting them). The eternal will
Shall deign to expound this dream
Of good and evil; and redeem
Unto himself all times, all things;
And, gather'd under his almighty wings,
Abolish hell!
And to the expiated Earth
Restore the beauty of her birth,
Her Eden in an endless paradise,
Where man no more can fall as once he fell,
And even the very demons shall do well!

Spirits. And when shall take effect this wondrous spell?

Japh. When the Redeemer cometh; first in pain.
And then in glory.

Spirit. Meantime still struggle in the mortal chain,
Till earth wax hoary;
War with yourselves, and hell, and heaven, in vain,
Until the clouds look gory
With the blood reeking from each battle plain.
New times, new climes, new arts, new men; but still,
The same old tears, old crimes, and oldest ill,
Shall be amongst your race in different forms;
But the same moral storms
Shall oversweep the future, as the waves
In a few hours the glorious giants' graves.

Chorus of Spirits.

Brethren, rejoice!
Mortal, farewell!
Hark! hark! already we can hear the voice
Of growing ocean's gloomy swell;
The winds, too, plume their piercing wings;
The clouds have nearly fill'd their springs;
The fountains of the great deep shall be broken,
And heaven set wide her windows; while mankind
View, unacknowledged, each tremendous token —
Still, as they were from the beginning, blind.
We hear the sound they cannot hear,
The mustering thunders of the threatening sphere;
Yet a few hours their coming is delay'd;
Their flashing banners, folded still on high,
Yet undisplay'd,
Save to the Spirit's all-pervading eye.
Howl! howl! oh Earth!
Thy death is nearer than thy recent birth:

Tremble, ye mountains, soon to shrink below
The ocean's overflow !
The wave shall break upon your cliffs; and shells,
The little shells of ocean's least things be
Deposed where now the eagle's offspring dwells —
How shall he shriek o'er the remorseless sea !
And call his nestlings up with fruitless yell,
Unanswer'd save by the enroaching swell;
While man shall long in vain for his broad wings,
The wings which could not save: —
Where could he rest them, while the whole space brings
Nought to his eye beyond the deep, his grave ?
Brethren, rejoice !
And loudly lift each superhuman voice —
All die,
Save the slight remnant of Seth's seed —
The seed of Seth,
Exempt for future sorrow's sake from death.
But of the sons of Cain
None shall remain;
And all his goodly daughters
Must lie beneath the desolating waters;
Or, floating upward, with their long hair laid
Along the wave, the cruel heaven upbraid,
Which would not spare
Beings even in death so fair.
It is decreed,
All die !
And to the universal human cry
The universal silence shall succeed !
Fly, brethren, fly !
But still rejoice !
We fell !
They fall !
So perish all
These petty foes of Heaven who shrink from hell !
[*The Spirits disappear, soaring upwards.*

Japh. (*solus*). God hath proclaim'd the destiny of earth;
My father's ark of safety hath announced it;
The very demons shriek it from their caves;
The scroll of Enoch prophesied it long
In silent books, which, in their silence, say
More to the mind than thunder to the ear:
And yet men listen'd not, nor listen; but
Walk darkling to their doom; which, though so nigh,
Shakes them no more in their dim disbelief,
Than their last cries shall shake the Almighty purpose,
Or deaf obedient ocean which fulfils it.
No sign yet hangs its banner in the air;
The clouds are few, and of their wonted texture;
The sun will rise upon the earth's last day
As on the fourth day of creation, when
God said unto him, 'Shine !' and he broke forth
Into the dawn, which lighted not the yet
Unform'd forefather of mankind — but roused
Before the human orison the earlier
Made and far sweeter voices of the birds,
Which in the open firmament of heaven
Have wings like angels, and like them salute
Heaven first each day before the Adamites.
Their matins now draw nigh — the east is kindling —
And they will sing ! and day will break ! Both near,
So near the awful close ! For these must drop
Their outworn pinions on the deep; and day,
After the bright course of a few brief morrows, —
Ay, day will rise; but upon what ? — a chaos
Which was ere day, and which, renew'd, makes time
Nothing ! for, without life, what are the hours ?
No more to dust than is eternity
Unto Jehovah, who created both.
Without him, even eternity would be
A void: without man, time, as made for man,
Dies with man, and is swallow'd in that deep
Which has no fountain; as his race will be
Devour'd by that which drowns his infant world. —
What have we here ? Shapes of both earth and air ?
No — *all* of heaven, they are so beautiful.
I cannot trace their features; but their forms,
How lovelily they move along the side

Of the grey mountain, scattering its mist!
And after the swart savage spirits, whose
Infernal immortality pour'd forth
Their impious hymn of triumph, they shall be
Welcome as Eden. It may be they come
To tell me the reprieve of our young world,
For which I have so often pray'd.—They come!
Anah! oh, God! and with her —

Enter SAMIASA, AZAZIEL, ANAH, *and* AHOLIBAMAH.

Anah. Japhet!
Sam. Lo,
A son of Adam!
Aza. What doth the earth-born here,
While all his race are slumbering?
Japh. Angel! what
Dost thou on earth when thou shouldst be on high?
Aza. Know'st thou not, or forget'st thou, that a part
Of our great function is to guard thine earth?
Japh. But all good angels have forsaken earth,
Which is condemn'd; nay, even the evil fly
The approaching chaos. Anah! Anah! my
In vain, and long, and still to be beloved!
Why walk'st thou with this spirit, in those hours
When no good spirit longer lights below?
Anah. Japhet, I cannot answer thee; yet, yet
Forgive me —
Japh. May the Heaven, which soon no more
Will pardon, do so! for thou art greatly tempted.
Aho. Back to thy tents, insulting son of Noah!
We know thee not.
Japh. The hour may come when thou
May'st know me better; and thy sister know
Me still the same which I have ever been.
Sam. Son of the patriarch, who hath ever been
Upright before his God, whate'er thy gifts,
And thy words seem of sorrow mix'd with wrath,
How have Azaziel, or myself, brought on thee
Wrong?
Japh. Wrong! the greatest of all wrongs; but thou
Say'st well, though she be dust, I did not, could not,
Deserve her. Farewell, Anah! I have said
That word so often, but now say it ne'er
To be repeated. Angel! or whate'er
Thou art, or must be soon, hast thou the power
To save this beautiful — *these* beautiful
Children of Cain?
Aza. From what?
Japh. And is it so,
That ye too know not? Angels! angels! ye
Have shared man's sin, and, it may be, now must
Partake his punishment; or, at the least,
My sorrow.
Sam. Sorrow! I ne'er thought till now
To hear an Adamite speak riddles to me.
Japh. And hath not the Most High expounded them?
Then ye are lost, as they are lost.
Aho. So be it!
If they love as they are loved, they will not shrink
More to be mortal, than I would to dare
An immortality of agonies
With Samiasa!
Anah. Sister! sister! speak not
Thus.
Aza. Fearest thou, my Anah?
Anah. Yes, for thee:
I would resign the greater remnant of
This little life of mine, before one hour
Of thine eternity should know a pang.
Japh. It is for *him*, then! for the seraph thou
Hast left me! That is nothing, if thou hast not
Left thy God too! for unions like to these,
Between a mortal and an immortal, cannot
Be happy or be hallow'd. We are sent
Upon the earth to toil and die; and they
Are made to minister on high unto
The Highest: but if he can *save* thee, soon
The hour will come in which celestial aid
Alone can do so.
Anah. Ah! he speaks of death.
Sam. Of death to *us!* and those who are with us!
But that the man seems full of sorrow, I
Could smile.
Japh. I grieve not for myself, nor fear;
I am safe, not for my own deserts, but those
Of a well-doing sire, who hath been found

Righteous enough to save his children. Would
His power was greater of redemption! or
That by exchanging my own life for hers,
Who could alone have made mine happy, she,
The last and loveliest of Cain's race, could share
The ark which shall receive a remnant of
The seed of Seth!
Aho. And dost thou think that we,
With Cain's, the eldest born of Adam's, blood
Warm in our veins, — strong Cain! who was begotten
In Paradise, — would mingle with Seth's children?
Seth, the last offspring of old Adam's dotage?
No, not to save all earth, were earth in peril!
Our race hath always dwelt apart from thine
From the beginning, and shall do so ever.
Japh. I did not speak to thee, Aholibamah!
Too much of the forefather whom thou vauntest
Has come down in that haughty blood which springs
From him who shed the first, and that a brother's!
But thou, my Anah! let me call thee mine,
Albeit thou art not; 't is a word I cannot
Part with, although I must from thee. My Anah!
Thou who dost rather make me dream that Abel
Had left a daughter, whose pure pious race
Survived in thee, so much unlike thou art
The rest of the stern Cainites, save in beauty,
For all of them are fairest in their favour —
Aho. (*interrupting him*). And wouldst thou have her like our father's foe
In mind, in soul? If *I* partook thy thought,
And dream'd that aught of *Abel* was in *her!* —
Get thee hence, son of Noah; thou makest strife.
Japh. Offspring of Cain, thy father did so!
Aho. But
He slew *not* Seth: and what hast thou to do
With other deeds between his God and him?
Japh. Thou speakest well: his God hath judged him, and
I had not named his deed, but that thyself
Didst seem to glory in him, nor to shrink
From what he had done.
Aho. He was our father's father;
The eldest born of man, the strongest, bravest,
And most enduring: — Shall I blush for him
From whom we had our being? Look upon
Our race; behold their stature and their beauty,
Their courage, strength, and length of days —
Japh. They are number'd.
Aho. Be it so! but while yet their hours endure,
I glory in my brethren and our fathers.
Japh. My sire and race but glory in their God.
Anah! and thou? —
Anah. Whate'er our God decrees,
The God of Seth as Cain, I must obey,
And will endeavour patiently to obey.
But could I dare to pray in his dread hour
Of universal vengeance (if such should be),
It would not be to live, alone exempt
Of all my house. My sister! oh, my sister!
What were the world, or other worlds, or all
The brighest future, without the sweet past —
Thy love — my father's — all the life, and all
The things which sprang up with me, like the stars,
Making my dim existence radiant with
Soft lights which were not mine? Aholibamah!
Oh! if there should be mercy — seek it, find it:
I abhor death, because that thou must die.
Aho. What, hath this dreamer, with his father's ark,
The bugbear he hath built to scare the world,
Shaken *my* sister? Are *we* not the loved
Of seraphs? and if we were not, must we
Cling to a son of Noah for our lives?
Rather than thus — But the enthusiast dreams
The worst of dreams, the fantasies engender'd
By hopeless love and heated vigils. Who
Shall shake these solid mountains, this firm earth,
And bid those clouds and waters take a shape
Distinct from that which we and all our sires

Have seen them wear on their eternal way?
Who shall do this?
Japh. He whose one word produced them.
Aho. Who *heard* that word?
Japh. The universe, which leap'd
To life before it. Ah! smilest thou still in scorn?
Turn to thy seraphs: if they attest it not,
They are none.
Sam. Aholibamah, own thy God!
Aho. I have ever hail'd our Maker, Samiasa,
As thine, and mine: a God of love, not sorrow.
Japh. Alas! what else is love but sorrow? Even
He who made earth in love had soon to grieve
Above its first and best inhabitants.
Aho. 'T is said so.
Japh. It is even so.

Enter NOAH *and* SHEM.

Noah. Japhet! What
Dost thou here with these children of the wicked?
Dread'st thou not to partake their coming doom?
Japh. Father, it cannot be a sin to seek
To save an earth-born being; and behold,
These are not of the sinful, since they have
The fellowship of angels.
Noah. These are they, then,
Who leave the throne of God, to take them wives
From out the race of Cain; the sons of heaven,
Who seek earth's daughters for their beauty?
Aza. Patriarch!
Thou hast said it.
Noah. Woe, woe, woe to such communion!
Has not God made a barrier between earth
And heaven, and limited each, kind to kind?
Sam. Was not man made in high Jehovah's image?
Did God not love what he had made? And what
Do we but imitate and emulate
His love unto created love?
Noah. I am
But man, and was not made to judge mankind,
Far less the sons of God; but as our God
Has deign'd to commune with me, and reveal
His judgments, I reply, that the descent
Of seraphs from their everlasting seat
Unto a perishable and perishing,
Even on the very *eve* of *perishing*, world,
Cannot be good.
Aza. What! though it were to save?
Noah. Not ye in all your glory can redeem
What he who made you glorious hath condemn'd.
Were your immortal mission safety, 't would
Be general, not for two, though beautiful;
And beautiful they are, but not the less
Condemn'd.
Japh. Oh, father! say it not.
Noah. Son! son!
If that thou wouldst avoid their doom, forget
That they exist: they soon shall cease to be;
While thou shalt be the sire of a new world,
And better.
Japh. Let me die with *this*, and *them*!
Noah. Thou *shouldst* for such a thought, but shalt not; he
Who *can* redeems thee.
Sam. And why him and thee,
More than what he, thy son, prefers to both?
Noah. Ask him who made thee greater than myself
And mine, but not less subject to his own
Almightiness. And lo! his mildest and
Least to be tempted messenger appears!

Enter RAPHAEL *the Archangel.*

Raph. Spirits!
Whose seat is near the throne,
What do ye here?
Is thus a seraph's duty to be shown,
Now that the hour is near
When earth must be alone?
Return!
Adore and burn
In glorious homage with the elected 'seven:'
Your place is heaven.
Sam. Raphael!
The first and fairest of the sons of God,
How long hath this been law,

That earth by angels must be left untrod ?
Earth ! which oft saw
Jehovah's footsteps not disdain her sod !
The world he loved, and made
For love; and oft have we obey'd
His frequent mission with delighted pinions:
Adoring him in his least works display'd;
Watching this youngest star of his dominions;
And, as the latest birth of his great word,
Eager to keep it worthy of our Lord.
Why is thy brow severe ?
And wherefore speak'st thou of destruction near ?
Raph. Had Samiasa and Azaziel been
In their true place, with the angelic choir,
Written in fire
They would have seen
Jehovah's late decree,
And not enquired their Maker's breath of me:
But ignorance must ever be
A part of sin;
And even the spirits' knowledge shall grow less
As they wax proud within;
For Blindness is the first-born of Excess.
When all good angels left the world, ye stay'd,
Stung with strange passions, and debased
By mortal feelings for a mortal maid:
But ye are pardon'd thus far, and replaced
With your pure equals. Hence ! away ! away !
Or stay,
And lose eternity by that delay !
Aza. And thou ! if earth be thus forbidden
In the decree
To us until this moment hidden,
Dost thou not err as we
In being here ?
Raph. I came to call ye back to your fit sphere,
In the great name and at the word of God,
Dear, dearest in themselves, and scarce less dear
That which I came to do: till now we trod
Together the eternal space; together
Let us still walk the stars. True, earth must die !
Her race, return'd into her womb, must wither,
And much which she inherits: but oh ! why
Cannot this earth be made, or be destroy'd,
Without involving ever some vast void
In the immortal ranks ? immortal still
In their immeasurable forfeiture.
Our brother Satan fell; his burning will
Rather than longer worship dared endure !
But ye who still are pure !
Seraphs ! less mighty than that mightiest one,
Think how he was undone !
And think if tempting man can compensate
For heaven desired too late ?
Long have I warr'd,
Long must I war
With him who deem'd it hard
To be created, and to acknowledge him
Who midst the cherubim
Made him as suns to a dependent star,
Leaving the archangels at his right hand dim.
I loved him — beautiful he was: oh heaven !
Save *his* who made, what beauty and what power
Was ever like to Satan's ! Would the hour
In which he fell could ever be forgiven !
The wish is impious: but, oh ye !
Yet undestroy'd, be warn'd ! Eternity
With him, or with his God, is in your choice:
He hath not tempted you; he cannot tempt
The angels, from his further snares exempt:
But man hath listen'd to his voice,
And ye to woman's — beautiful she is,
The serpent's voice less subtle than her kiss —
The snake but vanquish'd dust; but she will draw
A second host from heaven, to break heaven's law.
Yet, yet, oh fly !
Ye cannot die;
But they
Shall pass away,
While ye shall fill with shrieks the upper sky
For perishable clay,
Whose memory in your immortality
Shall long outlast the sun which gave them day.

Think how your essence differeth from theirs
In all but suffering! why partake
The agony to which they must be heirs —
Born to be plough'd with years, and sown with cares,
And reap'd by Death, lord of the human soil?
Even had their days been left to toil their path
Through time to dust, unshorten'd by God's wrath,
Still they are Evil's prey and Sorrow's spoil.
Aho. Let them fly!
I hear the voice which says that all must die
Sooner than our white-bearded patriarchs died;
And that on high
An ocean is prepared,
While from below
The deep shall rise to meet heaven's overflow.
Few shall be spared,
It seems; and, of that few, the race of Cain
Must lift their eyes to Adam's God in vain.
Sister! since it is so,
And the eternal Lord
In vain would be implored
For the remission of one hour of woe,
Let us resign even what we have adored,
And meet the wave, as we would meet the sword,
If not unmoved, yet undismay'd,
And wailing less for us than those who shall
Survive in mortal or immortal thrall,
And, when the fatal waters are allay'd,
Weep for the myriads who can weep no more.
Fly, seraphs! to your own eternal shore,
Where winds nor howl nor waters roar.
Our portion is to die,
And yours to live for ever:
But which is best, a dead eternity,
Or living, is but known to the great Giver.
Obey him, as we shall obey;
I would not keep this life of mine in clay
An hour beyond his will;
Nor see ye lose a portion of his grace,
For all the mercy which Seth's race
Find still.
Fly!
And as your pinions bear ye back to heaven,
Think that my love still mounts with thee on high,
Samiasa!
And if I look up with a tearless eye,
'T is that an angel's bride disdains to weep, —
Farewell! Now rise, inexorable deep!
Anah. And must we die?
And must I lose thee too,
Azaziel?
Oh my heart! my heart!
Thy prophecies were true!
And yet thou wert so happy too!
The blow, though not unlook'd for, falls as new:
But yet depart!
Ah! why?
Yet let me not retain thee — fly!
My pangs can be but brief; but thine would be
Eternal, if repulsed from heaven for me.
Too much already hast thou deign'd
To one of Adam's race!
Our doom is sorrow: not to us alone,
But to the spirits who have not disdain'd
To love us, cometh anguish with disgrace.
The first who taught us knowledge hath been hurl'd
From his once archangelic throne
Into some unknown world:
And thou, Azaziel! No —
Thou shalt not suffer woe
For me. Away! nor weep!
Thou canst not weep; but yet
May'st suffer more, not weeping: then forget
Her, whom the surges of the all-strangling deep
Can bring no pang like this. Fly! fly!
Being gone, 't will be less difficult to die.
Japh. Oh say not so!
Father! and thou, archangel, thou!
Surely celestial mercy lurks below
That pure severe serenity of brow:
Let them not meet this sea without a shore,
Save in our ark, or let me be no more!
Noah. Peace, child of passion, peace!
If not within thy heart, yet with thy tongue
Do God no wrong!
Live as he wills it — die, when he ordains,
A righteous death, unlike the seed of Cain's.
Cease, or be sorrowful in silence; cease
To weary Heaven's ear with thy selfish plaint.

Wouldst thou have God commit a sin for thee?
Such would it be
To alter his intent
For a mere mortal sorrow. Be a man!
And bear what Adam's race must bear, and can.
Japh. Ay, father! but when they are gone,
And we are alone,
Floating upon the azure desert, and
The depth beneath us hides our own dear land,
And dearer, silent friends and brethren, all
Buried in its immeasurable breast,
Who, who, our tears, our shrieks, shall then command?
Can we in desolation's peace have rest?
Oh God! be thou a God, and spare
Yet while 't is time!
Renew not Adam's fall:
Mankind were then but twain,
But they are numerous now as are the waves
And the tremendous rain,
Whose drops shall be less thick than would their graves,
Were graves permitted to the seed of Cain.
Noah. Silence, vain boy! each word of thine 's a crime.
Angel! forgive this stripling's fond despair.
Raph. Seraphs! these mortals speak in passion: Ye!
Who are, or should be, passionless and pure,
May now return with me.
Sam. It may not be:
We have chosen, and will endure.
Raph. Say'st thou?
Aza. He hath said it, and I say, Amen!
Raph. Again!
Then from this hour,
Shorn as ye are of all celestial power,
And aliens from your God,
Farewell!
Japh. Alas! where shall they dwell?
Hark, hark! Deep sounds, and deeper still,
Are howling from the mountain's bosom:
There 's not a breath of wind upon the hill,
Yet quivers every leaf, and drops each blossom:
Earth groans as if beneath a heavy load.
Noah. Hark, hark! the sea-birds cry!
In clouds they overspread the lurid sky,
And hover round the mountain, where before
Never a white wing, wetted by the wave,
Yet dared to soar,
Even when the waters wax'd too fierce to brave.
Soon it shall be their only shore,
And then, no more!
Japh. The sun! the sun!
He riseth, but his better light is gone;
And a black circle, bound
His glaring disk around,
Proclaims earth's last of summer days hath shone!
The clouds return into the hues of night,
Save where their brazen-colour'd edges streak
The verge where brighter morns were wont to break.
Noah. And lo! yon flash of light,
The distant thunder's harbinger, appears!
It cometh! hence, away!
Leave to the elements their evil prey!
Hence to where our all-hallow'd ark uprears
Its safe and wreckless sides!
Japh. Oh, father, stay!
Leave not my Anah to the swallowing tides!
Noah. Must we not leave all life to such? Begone!
Japh. Not I.
Noah. Then die
With them!
How darest thou look on that prophetic sky,
And seek to save what all things now condemn,
In overwhelming unison
With just Jehovah's wrath!
Japh. Can rage and justice join in the same path?
Noah. Blasphemer! darest thou murmur even now?
Raph. Patriarch, be still a father! smooth thy brow:
Thy son, despite his folly, shall not sink:
He knows not what he says, yet shall not drink
With sobs the salt foam of the swelling waters;
But be, when passion passeth, good as thou,
Nor perish like heaven's children with man's daughters.
Aho. The tempest cometh; heaven and earth unite
For the annihilation of all life.
Unequal is the strife
Between our strength and the Eternal Might!

Sam. But ours is with thee; we will bear ye far
To some untroubled star,
Where thou, and Anah, shalt partake our lot:
And if thou dost not weep for thy lost earth,
Our forfeit heaven shall also be forgot.
Anah. Oh! my dear father's tents, my place of birth,
And mountains, land, and woods! when ye are not,
Who shall dry up my tears?
Aza. Thy spirit-lord.
Fear not; though we are shut from heaven,
Yet much is ours, whence we cannot be driven.
Raph. Rebel! thy words are wicked, as thy deeds
Shall henceforth be but weak: the flaming sword,
Which chased the first-born out of Paradise,
Still flashes in the angelic hands.
Aza. It cannot slay us: threaten dust with death,
And talk of weapons unto that which bleeds.
What are thy swords in our immortal eyes?
Raph. The moment cometh to approve thy strength;
And learn at length
How vain to war with what thy God commands:
Thy former force was in thy faith.

Enter Mortals, flying for refuge.

Chorus of Mortals.

The heavens and earth are mingling — God! oh God!
What have we done? Yet spare!
Hark! even the forest beasts howl forth their prayer!
The dragon crawls from out his den,
To herd, in terror, innocent with men;
And the birds scream their agony through air.
Yet, yet, Jehovah! yet withdraw thy rod
Of wrath, and pity thine own world's despair!
Hear not man only but all nature plead!
Raph. Farewell, thou earth! ye wretched sons of clay,
I cannot, must not, aid you. 'T is decreed!
[*Exit* RAPHAEL.
Japh. Some clouds sweep on as vultures for their prey,
While others, fix'd as rocks, await the word
At which their wrathful vials shall be pour'd.
No azure more shall robe the firmament,
Nor spangled stars be glorious: Death hath risen:
In the sun's place a pale and ghastly glare
Hath wound itself around the dying air.
Aza. Come, Anah! quit this chaos-founded prison,
To which the elements again repair,
To turn it into what it was: beneath
The shelter of these wings thou shalt be safe,
As was the eagle's nestling once within
Its mother's. — Let the coming chaos chafe
With all its elements! Heed not their din!
A brighter world than this, where thou shalt breathe
Ethereal life, will we explore:
These darken'd clouds are not the only skies.
[AZAZIEL *and* SAMIASA *fly off, and disappear with* ANAH *and* AHOLIBAMAH.
Japh. They are gone! They have disappear'd amidst the roar
Of the forsaken world; and never more,
Whether they live, or die with all earth's life,
Now near its last, can aught restore
Anah unto these eyes.

Chorus of Mortals.

Oh son of Noah! mercy on thy kind!
What! wilt thou leave us all — all — *all* behind?
While safe amidst the elemental strife,
Thou sitt'st within thy guarded ark?
A Mother (*offering her infant to* JAPHET)
Oh let this child embark!
I brought him forth in woe,
But thought it joy
To see him to my bosom clinging so.
Why was he born?
What hath he done —
My unwean'd son —
To move Jehovah's wrath or scorn?
What is there in this milk of mine, that death
Should stir all heaven and earth up to destroy
My boy,
And roll the waters o'er his placid breath?
Save him, thou seed of Seth!
Or cursèd be — with him who made
Thee and thy race, for which we are betray'd!

Japh. Peace! 't is no hour for curses, but for prayer!

Chorus of Mortals.

For prayer!!!
And where
Shall prayer ascend,
When the swoln clouds unto the mountains bend
And burst,
And gushing oceans every barrier rend,
Until the very deserts know no thirst?
Accursed
Be he who made thee and thy sire!
We deem our curses vain; we must expire;
But as we know the worst,
Why should our hymn be raised, our knees be bent
Before the implacable Omnipotent,
Since we must fall the same?
If he hath made earth, let it be his shame,
To make a world for torture. — Lo! they come,
The loathsome waters, in their rage!
And with their roar make wholesome nature dumb!
The forest's trees (coeval with the hour
When Paradise upsprung,
Ere Eve gave Adam knowledge for her dower,
Or Adam his first hymn of slavery sung),
So massy, vast, yet green in their old age,
Are overtopp'd,
Their summer blossoms by the surges lopp'd,
Which rise, and rise, and rise.
Vainly we look up to the lowering skies —
They meet the seas,
And shut out God from our beseeching eyes.
Fly, son of Noah, fly! and take thine ease
In thine allotted ocean-tent;
And view, all floating o'er the element,
The corpses of the world of thy young days:
Then to Jehovah raise
Thy song of praise!

A Mortal. Blessed are the dead
Who die in the Lord!
And though the waters be o'er earth outspread,
Yet, as *his* word,
Be the decree adored!
He gave me life — he taketh but
The breath which is his own:
And though these eyes should be for ever shut,
Nor longer this weak voice before his throne
Be heard in supplicating tone,
Still blessèd be the Lord,
For what is past,
For that which is:
For all are his,
From first to last —
Time — space — eternity — life — death —
The vast known and immeasurable unknown.
He made and can unmake;
And shall *I*, for a little gasp of breath,
Blaspheme and groan?
No; let me die, as I have lived, in faith,
Nor quiver, though the universe may quake!

Chorus of Mortals.

Where shall we fly?
Not to the mountains high;
For now their torrents rush, with double roar,
To meet the ocean, which, advancing still,
Already grasps each drowning hill,
Nor leaves an unsearch'd cave.

Enter a Woman.

Woman. Oh, save me, save!
Our valley is no more:
My father and my father's tent,
My brethren and my brethren's herds,
The pleasant trees that o'er our noonday bent
And sent forth evening songs from sweetest birds,
The little rivulet which freshen'd all
Our pastures green,
No more are to be seen.
When to the mountain cliff I climb'd this morn,
I turn'd to bless the spot,
And not a leaf appear'd about to fall; —
And now they are not! —
Why was I born?

Japh. To die! in youth to die;
And happier in that doom,
Than to behold the universal tomb
Which I
Am thus condemn'd to weep above in vain.
Why, when all perish, why must I remain?

[The waters rise: Men fly in every direction; many are overtaken by the waves; the Chorus of Mortals disperses in search of safety up the mountains; Japhet remains upon a rock, while the Ark floats towards him in the distance

WERNER;
OR, THE INHERITANCE

A TRAGEDY

TO
THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOETHE,
BY ONE OF HIS HUMBLEST ADMIRERS,
THIS TRAGEDY IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE

The following drama is taken entirely from the *German's Tale*, *Kruitzner*, published many years ago in *Lee's Canterbury Tales;* written (I believe) by two sisters, of whom one furnished only this story and another, both of which are considered superior to the remainder of the collection. I have adopted the characters, plan, and even the language, of many parts of this story. Some of the characters are modified or altered, a few of the names changed, and one character (Ida of Stralenheim) added by myself; but in the rest the original is chiefly followed. When I was young (about fourteen, I think) I first read this tale, which made a deep impression upon me; and may, indeed, be said to contain the germ of much that I have since written. I am not sure that it ever was very popular; or, at any rate, its popularity has since been eclipsed by that of other great writers in the same department. But I have generally found that those who *had* read it, agreed with me in their estimate of the singular power of mind and conception which it develops. I should also add *conception*, rather than execution; for the story might, perhaps, have been developed with greater advantage. Amongst those whose opinions agreed with mine upon this story, I could mention some very high names: but it is not necessary, nor indeed of any use; for every one must judge according to his own feelings. I merely refer the reader to the original story, that he may see to what extent I have borrowed from it; and am not unwilling that he should find much greater pleasure in perusing it than the drama which is founded upon its contents.

I had begun a drama upon this tale so far back as 1815 (the first I ever attempted, except one at thirteen years old, called *Ulric and Ilvina*, which I had sense enough to burn), and had nearly completed an act, when I was interrupted by circumstances. This is somewhere amongst my papers in England; but as it has not been found, I have rewritten the first, and added the subsequent acts.

The whole is neither intended, nor in any shape adapted, for the stage.

PISA, *February*, 1822.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN

WERNER.
ULRIC.
STRALENHEIM.
IDENSTEIN.
GABOR.
FRITZ.
HENRICK.
ERIC.
ARNHEIM.
MEISTER.
RODOLPH.
LUDWIG.

WOMEN

JOSEPHINE.
IDA STRALENHEIM.

Scene — partly on the frontier of Silesia, and partly in Siegendorf Castle, near Prague.

Time — the Close of the Thirty Years' War.

ACT I

SCENE I

The Hall of a decayed Palace near a small Town on the Northern Frontier of Silesia — the Night tempestuous.

WERNER *and* JOSEPHINE *his wife.*

Jos. My love, be calmer!
Wer. I am calm.
Jos. To me —
Yes, but not to thyself: thy pace is hurried,
And no one walks a chamber like to ours
With steps like thine when his heart is at rest.
Were it a garden, I should deem thee happy,
And stepping with the bee from flower to flower;
But *here!*
Wer. 'T is chill; the tapestry lets through
The wind to which it waves: my blood is frozen.
Jos. Ah, no!
Wer. (*smiling*). Why! wouldst thou have it so?
Jos. I would
Have it a healthful current.
Wer. Let it flow
Until 't is spilt or check'd — how soon, I care not.
Jos. And am I nothing in thy heart?
Wer. All — all.
Jos. Then canst thou wish for that which must break mine?
Wer. (*approaching her slowly*). But for *thee* I had been — no matter what,
But much of good and evil; what I am
Thou knowest; what I might or should have been,
Thou knowest not: but still I love thee, nor
Shall aught divide us.

[WERNER *walks on abruptly, and then approaches* JOSEPHINE.

The storm of the night
Perhaps affects me; I am a thing of feelings,
And have of late been sickly, as, alas!
Thou know'st by sufferings more than mine, my love,
In watching me.
Jos. To see thee well is much —
To see thee happy —
Wer. Where hast thou seen such?
Let me be wretched with the rest!
Jos. But think
How many in this hour of tempest shiver
Beneath the biting wind and heavy rain,
Whose every drop bows them down nearer earth
Which hath no chamber for them save beneath
Her surface.
Wer. And that 's not the worst: who cares
For chambers? rest is all. The wretches whom
Thou namest — ay, the wind howls round them, and
The dull and dropping rain saps in their bones
The creeping marrow. I have been a soldier,
A hunter, and a traveller, and am
A beggar, and should know the thing thou talk'st of.
Jos. And art thou not now shelter'd from them all?
Wer. Yes. And from these alone.
Jos. And that is something.
Wer. True — to a peasant.
Jos. Should the nobly born
Be thankless for that refuge which their habits
Of early delicacy render more
Needful than to the peasant, when the ebb
Of fortune leaves them on the shoals of life?
Wer. It is not that, thou know'st it is not; we
Have borne all this, I 'll not say patiently,
Except in thee — but we have borne it.
Jos. Well?
Wer. Something beyond our outward sufferings (though
These were enough to gnaw into our souls)
Hath stung me oft, and more than ever, *now*.
When, but for this untoward sickness, which
Seized me upon this desolate frontier, and
Hath wasted, not alone my strength, but means,
And leaves us — no! this is beyond me! — but
For this I had been happy — *thou* been happy,
The splendour of my rank sustain'd, my name —
My father's name — been still upheld; and, more
Than those —
Jos. (*abruptly*). My son — our son — our Ulric,
Been clasp'd again in these long-empty arms,
And all a mother's hunger satisfied.
Twelve years! he was but eight then: — beautiful
He was, and beautiful he must be now,
My Ulric! my adored!
Wer. I have been full oft
The chase of Fortune; now she hath o'ertaken
My spirit where it cannot turn at bay, —
Sick, poor, and lonely.
Jos. Lonely! my dear husband?
Wer. Or worse — involving all I love, in this
Far worse than solitude. *Alone*, I had died,
And all been over in a nameless grave.
Jos. And I had not outlived thee; but pray take
Comfort! We have struggled long; and they who strive
With Fortune win or weary her at last,
So that they find the goal or cease to feel
Further. Take comfort, — we shall find our boy.
Wer. We were in sight of him, of every thing
Which could bring compensation for past sorrow —
And to be baffled thus!
Jos. We are not baffled.
Wer. Are we not penniless?
Jos. We ne'er were wealthy.
Wer. But I was born to wealth, and rank, and power;
Enjoy'd them, loved them, and, alas! abused them,
And forfeited them by my father's wrath,
In my o'er-fervent youth; but for the abuse
Long sufferings have atoned. My father's death

Left the path open, yet not without snares.
This cold and creeping kinsman, who so long
Kept his eye on me, as the snake upon
The fluttering bird, hath ere this time outstept me,
Become the master of my rights, and lord
Of that which lifts him up to princes in
Dominion and domain.
Jos. Who knows? our son
May have return'd back to his grandsire, and
Even now uphold thy rights for thee?
Wer. 'T is hopeless.
Since his strange disappearance from my father's,
Entailing, as it were, my sins upon
Himself, no tidings have reveal'd his course.
I parted with him to his grandsire, on
The promise that his anger would stop short
Of the third generation; but Heaven seems
To claim her stern prerogative, and visit
Upon my boy his father's faults and follies.
Jos. I must hope better still, — at least we have yet
Baffled the long pursuit of Stralenheim.
Wer. We should have done, but for this fatal sickness —
More fatal than a mortal malady,
Because it takes not life, but life's sole solace:
Even now I feel my spirit girt about
By the snares of this avaricious fiend; —
How do I know he hath not track'd us here?
Jos. He does not know thy person; and his spies,
Who so long watch'd thee, have been left at Hamburgh.
Our unexpected journey, and this change
Of name, leaves all discovery far behind:
None hold us here for aught save what we seem.
Wer. Save what we seem! save what we *are* — sick beggars,
Even to our very hopes. — Ha! ha!
Jos. Alas!
That bitter laugh!
Wer. *Who* would read in this form
The high soul of the son of a long line?
Who, in this garb, the heir of princely lands?
Who, in this sunken, sickly eye, the pride
Of rank and ancestry? in this worn cheek
And famine-hollow'd brow, the lord of halls
Which daily feast a thousand vassals?
Jos. You
Ponder'd not thus upon these worldly things,
My Werner, when you deign'd to choose for bride
The foreign daughter of a wandering exile.
Wer. An exile's daughter with an outcast son
Were a fit marriage; but I still had hopes
To lift thee to the state we both were born for.
Your father's house was noble, though decay'd;
And worthy by its birth to match with ours.
Jos. Your father did not think so, though 't was noble;
But had my birth been all my claim to match
With thee, I should have deem'd it what it is.
Wer. And what is that in thine eyes?
Jos. All which it
Has done in our behalf, — nothing.
Wer. How, — nothing?
Jos. Or worse; for it has been a canker in
Thy heart from the beginning: but for this,
We had not felt our poverty but as
Millions of myriads feel it, cheerfully;
But for these phantoms of thy feudal fathers,
Thou mightst have earn'd thy bread, as thousands earn it;
Or, if that seem too humble, tried by commerce,
Or other civic means, to amend thy fortunes.
Wer. (*ironically*). And been an Hanseatic burgher? Excellent!
Jos. Whate'er thou mightst have been, to me thou art
What no state high or low can ever change,
My heart's first choice; which chose thee, knowing neither
Thy birth, thy hopes, thy pride; nought save thy sorrows:
While they last, let me comfort or divide them;
When they end, let mine end with them, or thee!
Wer. My better angel! such I have ever found thee;
This rashness, or this weakness of my temper,
Ne'er raised a thought to injure thee or thine.
Thou didst not mar my fortunes: my own nature
In youth was such as to unmake an empire,

Had such been my inheritance; but now,
Chasten'd, subdued, out-worn, and taught to know
Myself, — to lose this for our son and thee!
Trust me, when, in my two-and-twentieth spring,
My father barr'd me from my father's house,
The last sole scion of a thousand sires
(For I was then the last), it hurt me less
Than to behold my boy and my boy's mother
Excluded in their innocence from what
My faults deserved — exclusion; although then
My passions were all living serpents, and
Twined like the gorgon's round me.
[*A loud knocking is heard.*

Jos. Hark!

Wer. A knocking!

Jos. Who can it be at this lone hour? We have
Few visitors.

Wer. And poverty hath none,
Save those who come to make it poorer still.
Well, I am prepared.

[*Werner puts his hand into his bosom, as if to search for some weapon.*

Jos. Oh! do not look so. I
Will to the door. It cannot be of import
In this lone spot of wintry desolation: —
The very desert saves man from mankind. [*She goes to the door.*

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Iden. A fair good evening to my fairer hostess
And worthy — What's your name, my friend?

Wer. Are you
Not afraid to demand it?

Iden. Not afraid?
Egad! I am afraid. You look as if
I ask'd for something better than your name,
By the face you put on it.

Wer. Better, sir!

Iden. Better or worse, like matrimony: what
Shall I say more? You have been a guest this month
Here in the prince's palace (to be sure,
His highness had resign'd it to the ghosts
And rats these twelve years — but 't is still a palace) —
I say you have been our lodger, and as yet
We do not know your name.

Wer. My name is Werner.

Iden. A goodly name, a very worthy name,
As e'er was gilt upon a trader's board:
I have a cousin in the lazaretto
Of Hamburgh, who has got a wife who bore
The same. He is an officer of trust,
Surgeon's assistant (hoping to be surgeon),
And has done miracles i' the way of business.
Perhaps you are related to my relative?

Wer. To yours?

Jos. Oh, yes; we are, but distantly.
[*Aside to* WERNER.
Cannot you humour the dull gossip till
We learn his purpose?

Iden. Well, I'm glad of that;
I thought so all along, such natural yearnings
Play'd round my heart: blood is not water, cousin;
And so let's have some wine, and drink unto
Our better acquaintance; relatives should be
Friends.

Wer. You appear to have drunk enough already;
And if you had not, I've no wine to offer,
Else it were yours; but this you know, or should know:
You see I am poor and sick, and will not see
That I would be alone; but to your business!
What brings you here?

Iden. Why, what should bring me here?

Wer. I know not, though I think that I could guess
That which will send you hence.

Jos. (*aside*). Patience, dear Werner!

Iden. You don't know what has happen'd, then?

Jos. How should we?

Iden. The river has o'erflow'd.

Jos. Alas! we have known
That to our sorrow for these five days; since
It keeps us here.

Iden. But what you don't know is,
That a great personage, who fain would cross

Against the stream and three postillions' wishes,
Is drown'd below the ford, with five post-horses,
A monkey, and a mastiff, and a valet.
Jos. Poor creatures! are you sure?
Iden. Yes, of the monkey,
And the valet, and the cattle; but as yet
We know not if his excellency 's dead
Or no; your noblemen are hard to drown,
As it is fit that men in office should be.
But what is certain is, that he has swallow'd
Enough of the Oder to have burst two peasants;
And now a Saxon and Hungarian traveller,
Who at their proper peril snatch'd him from
The whirling river, have sent on to crave
A lodging, or a grave, according as
It may turn out with the live or dead body.
Jos. And where will you receive him? here, I hope.
If we can be of service — say the word.
Iden. Here? no; but in the prince's own apartment,
As fits a noble guest: — 't is damp, no doubt,
Not having been inhabited these twelve years;
But then he comes from a much damper place,
So scarcely will catch cold in 't, if he be
Still liable to cold — and if not, why
He 'll be worse lodged to-morrow: ne'ertheless
I have order'd fire and all appliances
To be got ready for the worst — that is,
In case he should survive.
Jos. Poor gentleman!
I hope he will, with all my heart.
Wer. Intendant,
Have you not learn'd his name? — My Josephine, [*Aside to his wife.*
Retire; I 'll sift this fool.
Iden. His name? oh Lord!
Who knows if he hath now a name or no?
'T is time enough to ask it when he 's able
To give an answer; or if not, to put
His heir's upon his epitaph. Methought
Just now you chid me for demanding names?
Wer. True, true, I did so; you say well and wisely.

Enter GABOR.

Gab. If I intrude, I crave —
Iden. Oh, no intrusion!
This is the palace; this a stranger like
Yourself; I pray you make yourself at home.
But where 's his excellency? and how fares he?
Gab. Wetly and wearily, but out of peril:
He paused to change his garments in a cottage
(Where I doff'd mine for these, and came on hither),
And has almost recover'd from his drenching.
He will be here anon.
Iden. What ho, there! bustle!
Without there, Herman, Weilburg, Peter, Conrad!
[*Gives directions to different servants who enter.*
A nobleman sleeps here to-night — see that
All is in order in the damask chamber —
Keep up the stove — I will myself to the cellar —
And Madame Idenstein (my consort, stranger)
Shall furnish forth the bed-apparel; for,
To say the truth, they are marvellous scant of this
Within the palace precincts, since his highness
Left it some dozen years ago. And then
His excellency will sup, doubtless?
Gab. Faith!
I cannot tell; but I should think the pillow
Would please him better than the table after
His soaking in your river: but for fear
Your viands should be thrown away, I mean
To sup myself, and have a friend without
Who will do honour to your good cheer with
A traveller's appetite.
Iden. But are you sure
His excellency — But his name: what is it?
Gab. I do not know.
Iden. And yet you saved his life.
Gab. I help'd my friend to do so.
Iden. Well, that 's strange,
To save a man's life whom you do not know.
Gab. Not so; for there are some I know so well,
I scarce should give myself the trouble.
Iden. Pray,
Good friend, and who may you be?
Gab. By my family,
Hungarian.
Iden. Which is call'd?

Gab. It matters little.
Iden. (*aside*). I think that all the world are grown anonymous,
Since no one cares to tell me what he's call'd!
Pray, has his excellency a large suite?
Gab. Sufficient.
Iden. How many?
Gab. I did not count them.
We came up by mere accident, and just
In time to drag him through his carriage window.
Iden. Well, what would I give to save a great man!
No doubt you 'll have a swingeing sum as recompense.
Gab. Perhaps.
Iden. Now, how much do you reckon on?
Gab. I have not yet put up myself to sale:
In the mean time, my best reward would be
A glass of your Hockcheimer — *a green* glass,
Wreath'd with rich grapes and Bacchanal devices,
O'erflowing with the oldest of your vintage;
For which I promise you, in case you e'er
Run hazard of being drown'd (although I own
It seems, of all deaths, the least likely for you),
I 'll pull you out for nothing. Quick, my friend,
And think, for every bumper I shall quaff,
A wave the less may roll above your head.
Iden. (*aside*). I don't much like this fellow — close and dry
He seems, two things which suit me not; however,
Wine he shall have; if that unlocks him not,
I shall not sleep to-night for curiosity.
[*Exit* IDENSTEIN
Gab. (*to* WERNER). This master of the ceremonies is
The intendant of the palace, I presume:
'T is a fine building, but decay'd.
Wer. The apartment
Design'd for him you rescued will be found
In fitter order for a sickly guest.
Gab. I wonder then you occupied it not,
For you seem delicate in health.
Wer. (*quickly*). Sir!
Gab. Pray,
Excuse me: have I said aught to offend you?
Wer. Nothing: but we are strangers to each other.
Gab. And that 's the reason I would have us less so:
I thought our bustling host without had said
You were a chance and passing guest, the counterpart
Of me and my companions.
Wer. Very true.
Gab. Then, as we never met before, and never,
It may be, may again encounter, why,
I thought to cheer up this old dungeon here
(At least to me) by asking you to share
The fare of my companions and myself.
Wer. Pray, pardon me; my health —
Gab. Even as you please.
I have been a soldier, and perhaps am blunt
In bearing.
Wer. I have also served, and can
Requite a soldier's greeting.
Gab. In what service?
The Imperial?
Wer. (*quickly, and then interrupting himself*). I commanded — no — I mean
I served; but it is many years ago,
When first Bohemia raised her banner 'gainst
The Austrian.
Gab. Well, that 's over now, and peace
Has turn'd some thousand gallant hearts adrift
To live as they best may; and, to say truth,
Some take the shortest.
Wer. What is that?
Gab. Whate'er
They lay their hands on. All Silesia and
Lusatia's woods are tenanted by bands
Of the late troops, who levy on the country
Their maintenance: the Chatelains must keep
Their castle walls — beyond them 't is but doubtful
Travel for your rich count or full-blown baron.
My comfort is that, wander where I may,
I 've little left to lose now.
Wer. And I — nothing.
Gab. That 's harder still. You say you were a soldier.
Wer. I was.
Gab. You look one still. All soldiers are
Or should be comrades, even though enemies.
Our swords when drawn must cross, our engines aim

(While levell'd) at each other's hearts; but when
A truce, a peace, or what you will, remits
The steel into its scabbard, and lets sleep
The spark which lights the matchlock, we are brethren.
You are poor and sickly — I am not rich, but healthy;
I want for nothing which I cannot want;
You seem devoid of this — wilt share it?
[GABOR *pulls out his purse.*
Wer. Who
Told you I was a beggar?
Gab. You yourself,
In saying you were a soldier during peace-time.
Wer. (*looking at him with suspicion*). You know me not?
Gab. I know no man, not even
Myself: how should I then know one I ne'er
Beheld till half an hour since?
Wer. Sir, I thank you.
Your offer 's noble were it to a friend,
And not unkind as to an unknown stranger,
Though scarcely prudent; but no less I thank you.
I am a beggar in all save his trade;
And when I beg of any one, it shall be
Of him who was the first to offer what
Few can obtain by asking. Pardon me.
[*Exit* WER.
Gab. (*solus*). A goodly fellow by his looks, though worn,
As most good fellows are, by pain or pleasure,
Which tear life out of us before our time;
I scarce know which most quickly; but he seems
To have seen better days, as who has not
Who has seen yesterday? — But here approaches
Our sage intendant, with the wine: however,
For the cup's sake I 'll bear the cupbearer.

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Iden. 'T is here! the supernaculum! twenty years
Of age, if 't is a day.
Gab. Which epoch makes
Young women and old wine; and 't is great pity,
Of two such excellent things, increase of years,
Which still improves the one, should spoil the other.
Fill full — Here 's to our hostess! — your fair wife! [*Takes the glass.*
Iden. Fair! — Well, I trust your taste in wine is equal
To that you show for beauty; but I pledge you
Nevertheless.
Gab. Is not the lovely woman
I met in the adjacent hall, who, with
An air and port and eye, which would have better
Beseem'd this palace in its brightest days
(Though in a garb adapted to its present
Abandonment), return'd my salutation —
Is not the same your spouse?
Iden. I would she were!
But you 're mistaken: — that 's the stranger's wife.
Gab. And by her aspect she might be a prince's:
Though time hath touch'd her too, she still retains
Much beauty, and more majesty.
Iden. And that
Is more than I can say for Madame Idenstein,
At least in beauty: as for majesty,
She has some of its properties which might
Be spared — but never mind!
Gab. I don't. But who
May be this stranger? He too hath a bearing
Above his outward fortunes.
Iden. There I differ.
He 's poor as Job, and not so patient; but
Who he may be, or what, or aught of him,
Except his name (and that I only learn'd
To-night), I know not.
Gab. But how came he here?
Iden. In a most miserable old caleche,
About a month since, and immediately
Fell sick, almost to death. He should have died.
Gab. Tender and true! — but why?
Iden. Why, what is life
Without a living? He has not a stiver.
Gab. In that case, I much wonder that a person
Of your apparent prudence should admit
Guests so forlorn into this noble mansion.
Iden. That 's true; but pity, as you know, *does* make

One's heart commit these follies; and besides,
They had some valuables left at that time,
Which paid their way up to the present hour;
And so I thought they might as well be lodged
Here as at the small tavern, and I gave them
The run of some of the oldest palace rooms.
They served to air them, at the least as long
As they could pay for fire-wood.
Gab. Poor souls !
Iden. Ay,
Exceeding poor.
Gab. And yet unused to poverty,
If I mistake not. Whither were they going ?
Iden. Oh ! Heaven knows where, unless to heaven itself.
Some days ago that look'd the likeliest journey
For Werner.
Gab. Werner ! I have heard the name:
But it may be a feign'd one
Iden. Like enough !
But hark ! a noise of wheels and voices, and
A blaze of torches from without. As sure
As destiny, his excellency 's come.
I must be at my post: will you not join me,
To help him from his carriage, and present
Your humble duty at the door ?
Gab. I dragg'd him
From out that carriage when he would have given
His barony or county to repel
The rushing river from his gurgling throat.
He has valets now enough: they stood aloof then,
Shaking their dripping ears upon the shore,
All roaring 'Help !' but offering none; and as
For *duty* (as you call it) — I did mine *then*,
Now do *yours*. Hence, and bow and cringe him here !
Iden. *I* cringe ! — but I shall lose the opportunity —
Plague take it ! he 'll be *here*, and I *not there !* [*Exit* IDENSTEIN *hastily.*

Re-enter WERNER.

Wer. (*to himself*). I heard a noise of wheels and voices. How
All sounds now jar me ! [*Perceiving* GABOR.
Still here ! Is he not
A spy of my pursuer's ? His frank offer
So suddenly, and to a stranger, wore
The aspect of a secret enemy;
For friends are slow at such.
Gab. Sir, you seem rapt;
And yet the time is not akin to thought.
These old walls will be noisy soon. The baron,
Or count (or whatsoe'er this half-drown'd noble
May be), for whom this desolate village and
Its lone inhabitants show more respect
Than did the elements, is come.
Iden. (*without*). This way —
This way, your excellency: — have a care,
The staircase is a little gloomy, and
Somewhat decay'd: but if we had expected
So high a guest — Pray take my arm, my lord !

Enter STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, *and Attendants — partly his own, and partly Retainers of the Domain of which* IDENSTEIN *is Intendant.*

Stral. I 'll rest me here a moment.
Iden. (*to the servants*). Ho ! a chair !
Instantly, knaves ! [STRALENHEIM *sits down.*
Wer. (*aside*). 'T is he !
Stral. I 'm better now.
Who are these strangers ?
Iden. Please you, my good lord,
One says he is no stranger.
Wer. (*aloud and hastily*). *Who* says that ?
[*They look at him with surprise.*
Iden. Why, no one spoke *of you*, or *to you !* — but
Here 's one his excellency may be pleased
To recognise. [*Pointing to* GABOR.
Gab. I seek not to disturb
His noble memory.
Stral. I apprehend
This is one of the strangers to whose aid
I owe my rescue. Is not that the other ?
[*Pointing to* WERNER.
My state when I was succour'd must excuse
My uncertainty to whom I owe so much.
Iden. He ! — no, my lord, he rather wants for rescue
Than can afford it. 'T is a poor sick man,
Travel-tired, and lately risen from a bed
From whence he never dream'd to rise.
Stral. Methought
That there were two.
Gab. There were, in company;
But, in the service render'd to your lordship,
I needs must say but *one*, and he is absent.

The chief part of whatever aid was render'd
Was *his*: it was his fortune to be first.
My will was not inferior, but his strength
And youth outstripp'd me; therefore do not waste
Your thanks on me. I was but a glad second
Unto a nobler principal.
Stral. Where is he?
An Atten. My lord, he tarried in the cottage where
Your excellency rested for an hour,
And said he would be here to-morrow.
Stral. Till
That hour arrives, I can but offer thanks,
And then —
Gab. I seek no more, and scarce deserve
So much. My comrade may speak for himself.
Stral. (*fixing his eyes upon* Werner; *then aside*). It cannot be! and yet he must be look'd to.
'T is twenty years since I beheld him with
These eyes; and, though my agents still have kept
Theirs on him, policy has held aloof
My own from his, not to alarm him into
Suspicion of my plan. Why did I leave
At Hamburgh those who would have made assurance
If this be he or no? I thought, ere now,
To have been lord of Siegendorf, and parted
In haste, though even the elements appear
To fight against me, and this sudden flood
May keep me prisoner here till —
[*He pauses, and looks at* Werner; *then resumes.*
This man must
Be watch'd. If it is he, he is so changed,
His father, rising from his grave again,
Would pass him by unknown. I must be wary:
An error would spoil all.
Iden. Your lordship seems
Pensive. Will it not please you to pass on?
Stral. 'T is past fatigue which gives my weigh'd-down spirit
An outward show of thought. I will to rest.
Iden. The prince's chamber is prepared, with all
The very furniture the prince used when
Last here, in its full splendour.
(*Aside.*) Somewhat tatter'd,
And devilish damp, but fine enough by torch-light;
And that 's enough for your right noble blood
Of twenty quarterings upon a hatchment;
So let their bearer sleep 'neath something like one
Now, as he one day will forever lie.
Stral. (*rising and turning to* Gabor). Good-night, good people! Sir, I trust to-morrow
Will find me apter to requite your service.
In the meantime I crave your company
A moment in my chamber.
Gab. I attend you.
Stral. (*after a few steps, pauses, and calls* Werner). Friend!
Wer. Sir!
Iden. *Sir!* Lord — oh Lord! Why don't you say
His lordship, or his excellency? Pray,
My lord, excuse this poor man's want of breeding:
He hath not been accustom'd to admission
To such a presence.
Stral. (*to* Idenstein). Peace, intendant!
Iden. Oh!
I am dumb.
Stral. (*to* Werner). Have you been long here?
Wer. Long?
Stral. I sought
An answer, not an echo.
Wer. You may seek
Both from the walls. I am not used to answer
Those whom I know not.
Stral. Indeed! Ne'er the less,
You might reply with courtesy to what
Is ask'd in kindness.
Wer. When I know it such,
I will requite — that is, *reply* — in unison.
Stral. The intendant said, you had been detain'd by sickness;
If I could aid you — journeying the same way?
Wer. (*quickly*). I am not journeying the same way!
Stral. How know ye
That, ere you know my route?
Wer. Because there is
But one way that the rich and poor must tread
Together. You diverged from that dread path

Some hours ago, and I some days: henceforth
Our roads must lie asunder, though they tend
All to one home.
Stral. Your language is above
Your station.
Wer. (*bitterly*). Is it?
Stral. Or, at least, beyond
Your garb.
Wer. 'T is well that it is not beneath it,
As sometimes happens to the better clad.
But, in a word, what would you with me?
Stral. (*startled*). I?
Wer. Yes — you! You know me not, and question me,
And wonder that I answer not — not knowing
My inquisitor. Explain what you would have,
And then I 'll satisfy yourself, or me.
Stral. I knew not that you had reasons for reserve.
Wer. Many have such: — Have you none?
Stral. None which can
Interest a mere stranger.
Wer. Then forgive
The same unknown and humble stranger, if
He wishes to remain so to the man
Who can have nought in common with him.
Stral. Sir,
I will not balk your humour, though untoward:
I only meant you service — but good night!
Intendant, show the way! (*to* Gabor). Sir, you will with me?

[*Exeunt* Stralenheim *and attendants*; Idenstein *and* Gabor.

Wer. (*solus*). 'T is he! I am taken in the toils. Before
I quitted Hamburgh, Giulio, his late steward,
Inform'd me, that he had obtain'd an order
From Brandenburg's elector, for the arrest
Of Kruitzner (such the name I then bore), when
I came upon the frontier; the free city
Alone preserved my freedom — till I left
Its walls — fool that I was to quit them! But
I deem'd this humble garb, and route obscure,
Had baffled the slow hounds in their pursuit.
What 's to be done? He knows me not by person;
Nor could aught, save the eye of apprehension,
Have recognised *him* after twenty years,
We met so rarely and so coldly in
Our youth. But those about him! Now I can
Divine the frankness of the Hungarian, who
No doubt is a mere tool and spy of Stralenheim's,
To sound and to secure me. Without means!
Sick, poor — begirt too with the flooding rivers,
Impassable even to the wealthy with
All the appliances which purchase modes
Of overpowering peril with men's lives, —
How can I hope! An hour ago methought
My state beyond despair; and now, 't is such,
The past seems paradise. Another day,
And I 'm detected, — on the very eve
Of honours, rights, and my inheritance,
When a few drops of gold might save me still
In favouring an escape.

Enter Idenstein *and* Fritz *in conversation.*

Fritz. Immediately.
Iden. I tell you 't is impossible.
Fritz. It must
Be tried, however; and if one express
Fail, you must send on others, till the answer
Arrives from Frankfort, from the commandant.
Iden. I will do what I can.
Fritz. And recollect
To spare no trouble; you will be repaid
Tenfold.
Iden. The baron is retired to rest?
Fritz. He hath thrown himself into an easy chair
Beside the fire, and slumbers; and has order'd
He may not be disturb'd until eleven,
When he will take himself to bed.
Iden. Before
An hour is past I 'll do my best to serve him.
Fritz. Remember! [*Exit* Fritz.

Iden. The devil take these great men! they
Think all things made for them. Now here must I
Rouse up some half a dozen shivering vassals
From their scant pallets, and, at peril of
Their lives, despatch them o'er the river towards
Frankfort. Methinks the baron's own experience
Some hours ago might teach him fellow-feeling:
But no, 'it *must*,' and there 's an end. How now?
Are you there, Mynheer Werner?
Wer. You have left
Your noble guest right quickly.
Iden. Yes — he 's dozing,
And seems to like that none should sleep besides.
Here is a packet for the commandant
Of Frankfort, at all risks and all expenses:
But I must not lose time: Good-night!
[*Exit* IDEN.
Wer. 'To Frankfort'!
So, so, it thickens! Ay, 'the commandant.'
This tallies well with all the prior steps
Of this cool, calculating fiend, who walks
Between me and my father's house. No doubt
He writes for a detachment to convey me
Into some secret fortress. — Sooner than
This —
[WERNER *looks around, and snatches up a knife lying on a table in a recess.*
Now I am master of myself at least.
Hark, — footsteps! How do I know that Stralenheim
Will wait for even the show of that authority
Which is to overshadow usurpation?
That he suspects me 's certain. I 'm alone;
He with a numerous train: I weak; he strong
In gold, in numbers, rank, authority:
I nameless, or involving in my name
Destruction, till I reach my own domain;
He full-blown with his titles, which impose
Still further on these obscure petty burghers
Than they could do elsewhere. Hark! nearer still!
I 'll to the secret passage, which communicates
With the — No! all is silent — 't was my fancy! —
Still as the breathless interval between
The flash and thunder: — I must hush my soul
Amidst its perils. Yet I will retire,
To see if still be unexplored the passage
I wot of: it will serve me as a den
Of secrecy for some hours, at the worst.
[WERNER *draws a panel, and exit, closing it after him.*

Enter GABOR *and* JOSEPHINE.

Gab. Where is your husband?
Jos. *Here*, I thought: I left him
Not long since in his chamber. But these rooms
Have many outlets, and he may be gone
To accompany the intendant.
Gab. Baron Stralenheim
Put many questions to the intendant on
The subject of your lord, and, to be plain,
I have my doubts if he means well.
Jos. Alas!
What can there be in common with the proud
And wealthy baron, and the unknown Werner?
Gab. That you know best.
Jos. Or, if it were so, how
Come you to stir yourself in his behalf,
Rather than that of him whose life you saved?
Gab. I help'd to save him, as in peril; but
I did not pledge myself to serve him in
Oppression. I know well these nobles, and
Their thousand modes of trampling on the poor.
I have proved them; and my spirit boils up when
I find them practising against the weak: —
This is my only motive.
Jos. It would be
Not easy to persuade my consort of
Your good intentions.
Gab. Is he so suspicious?
Jos. He was not once; but time and troubles have
Made him what you beheld.
Gab. I 'm sorry for it.
Suspicion is a heavy armour, and
With its own weight impedes more than protects.
Good night! I trust to meet with him at daybreak.
[*Exit* GABOR.

Re-enter IDENSTEIN *and some Peasants.* JOSEPHINE *retires up the Hall.*

First Peasant. But if I 'm drown'd?

Iden. Why, you will be well paid for 't,
And have risk'd more than drowning for as much,
I doubt not.
Second Peasant. But our wives and families?
Iden. Cannot be worse off than they are, and may
Be better.
Third Peasant. I have neither, and will venture.
Iden. That 's right. A gallant carle, and fit to be
A soldier. I 'll promote you to the ranks
In the prince's body-guard — if you succeed;
And you shall have besides, in sparkling coin,
Two thalers.
Third Peasant. No more!
Iden. Out upon your avarice!
Can that low vice alloy so much ambition?
I tell thee, fellow, that two thalers in
Small change will subdivide into a treasure.
Do not five hundred thousand heroes daily
Risk lives and souls for the tithe of one thaler?
When had you half the sum?
Third Peasant. Never — but ne'er
The less I must have three.
Iden. Have you forgot
Whose vassal you were born, knave?
Third Peasant. No — the prince's,
And not the stranger's.
Iden. Sirrah! in the prince's
Absence, I 'm sovereign; and the baron is
My intimate connexion; — 'Cousin Idenstein!
(Quoth he) you 'll order out a dozen villains.'
And so, you villains! troop — march — march, I say;
And if a single dog's-ear of this packet
Be sprinkled by the Oder — look to it!
For every page of paper, shall a hide
Of yours be stretch'd as parchment on a drum,
Like Ziska's skin, to beat alarm to all
Refractory vassals, who can not effect
Impossibilities — Away, ye earth-worms!
[*Exit, driving them out.*
Jos. (*coming forward*). I fain would shun these scenes, too oft repeated,
Of feudal tyranny o'er petty victims;
I cannot aid, and will not witness such.
Even here, in this remote, unnamed, dull spot,
The dimmest in the district's map, exist
The insolence of wealth in poverty
O'er something poorer still — the pride of rank
In servitude, o'er something still more servile;
And vice in misery affecting still
A tatter'd splendour. What a state of being!
In Tuscany, my own dear sunny land,
Our nobles were but citizens and merchants,
Like Cosmo. We had evils, but not such
As these; and our all-ripe and gushing valleys
Made poverty more cheerful, where each herb
Was in itself a meal, and every vine
Rain'd, as it were, the beverage which makes glad
The heart of man; and the ne'er unfelt sun
(But rarely clouded, and when clouded, leaving
His warmth behind in memory of his beams)
Makes the worn mantle, and the thin robe, less
Oppressive than an emperor's jewell'd purple.
But, here! the despots of the north appear
To imitate the ice-wind of their clime,
Searching the shivering vassal through his rags,
To wring his soul — as the bleak elements
His form. And 't is to be amongst these sovereigns
My husband pants! and such his pride of birth,
That twenty years of usage, such as no
Father born in a humble state could nerve
His soul to persecute a son withal,
Hath changed no atom of his early nature;
But I, born nobly also, from my father's
Kindness was taught a different lesson. Father!
May thy long-tried and now rewarded spirit
Look down on us and our so long desired
Ulric! I love my son, as thou didst me!
What 's that? Thou, Werner! can it be? and thus?

Enter Werner *hastily, with the knife in his hand, by the secret panel, which he closes hurriedly after him.*

Wer. (*not at first recognising her*). Discover'd! then I'll stab — (*recognising her.*) Ah! Josephine,
Why art thou not at rest?
Jos. What rest? My God!
What doth this mean?
Wer. (*showing a rouleau*). Here 's *gold* — *gold*, Josephine,
Will rescue us from this detested dungeon.
Jos. And how obtain'd? — that knife!
Wer. 'T is bloodless — *yet.*
Away — we must to our chamber.
Jos. But whence comest thou?
Wer. Ask not! but let us think where we shall go —
This — this will make us way (*showing the gold*) — I 'll fit them now
Jos. I dare not think thee guilty of dishonour.
Wer. Dishonour!
Jos. I have said it.
Wer. Let us hence:
'T is the last night, I trust, that we need pass here.
Jos. And not the worst, I hope.
Wer. Hope! I make *sure.*
But let us to our chamber.
Jos. Yet one question —
What hast thou *done?*
Wer. (*fiercely*). Left one thing *undone* which
Had made all well: let me not think of it!
Away!
Jos. Alas, that I should doubt of thee!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II

Scene I

A Hall in the same Palace.

Enter Idenstein *and Others.*

Iden. Fine doings! goodly doings! honest doings!
A baron pillaged in a prince's palace!
Where, till this hour, such a sin ne'er was heard of.
Fritz. It hardly could, unless the rats despoil'd
The mice of a few shreds of tapestry.
Iden. Oh! that I e'er should live to see this day!
The honour of our city 's gone for ever.
Fritz. Well, but now to discover the delinquent:
The baron is determined not to lose
This sum without a search.
Iden. And so am I.
Fritz. But whom do you suspect?
Iden. Suspect! all people
Without — within — above — below — Heaven help me!
Fritz. Is there no other entrance to the chamber?
Iden. None whatsoever.
Fritz. Are you sure of that?
Iden. Certain. I have lived and served here since my birth,
And if there were such, must have heard of such,
Or seen it.
Fritz. Then it must be some one who
Had access to the antechamber.
Iden. Doubtless
Fritz. The man call'd *Werner* 's poor!
Iden. Poor as a miser;
But lodged so far off, in the other wing,
By which there 's no communication with
The baron's chamber, that it can't be he.
Besides, I bade him 'good night' in the hall,
Almost a mile off, and which only leads
To his own apartment, about the same time
When this burglarious, larcenous felony
Appears to have been committed.
Fritz. There 's another,
The stranger —
Iden. The Hungarian?
Fritz. He who help'd
To fish the baron from the Oder.
Iden. Not
Unlikely. But, hold — might it not have been
One of the suite?
Fritz. How? *We*, sir!
Iden. No — not *you*,
But some of the inferior knaves. You say
The baron was asleep in the great chair —
The velvet chair — in his embroider'd night-gown;
His toilet spread before him, and upon it
A cabinet with letters, papers, and
Several rouleaux of gold; of which *one* only
Has disappear'd; — the door unbolted, with
No difficult access to any.
Fritz. Good sir,
Be not so quick; the honour of the corps
Which forms the baron's household 's unimpeach'd.

From steward to scullion, save in the fair way
Of peculation; such as in accompts,
Weights, measures, larder, cellar, buttery,
Where all men take their prey; as also in
Postage of letters, gathering of rents,
Purveying feasts, and understanding with
The honest trades who furnish noble masters:
But for your petty, picking, downright thievery,
We scorn it as we do board-wages. Then
Had one of our folks done it, he would not
Have been so poor a spirit as to hazard
His neck for *one* rouleau, but have swoop'd all;
Also the cabinet, if portable.
Iden. There is some sense in that —
Fritz. No, sir, be sure
'T was none of our corps; but some petty, trivial
Picker and stealer, without art or genius.
The only question is — Who else could have
Access, save the Hungarian and yourself?
Iden. You don't mean me?
Fritz. No, sir; I honour more
Your talents —
Iden. And my principles, I hope.
Fritz. Of course. But to the point: What 's to be done?
Iden. Nothing — but there 's a good deal to be said.
We 'll offer a reward; move heaven and earth,
And the police (though there 's none nearer than
Frankfort); post notices in manuscript
(For we 've no printer); and set by my clerk
To read them (for few can, save he and I).
We 'll send out villains to strip beggars, and
Search empty pockets; also, to arrest
All gipsies, and ill-clothed and sallow people.
Prisoners we 'll have at least, if not the culprit;
And for the baron's gold — if 't is not found,
At least he shall have the full satisfaction
Of melting twice its substance in the raising
The ghost of this rouleau. Here 's alchymy
For your lord's losses!
Fritz. He hath found a better.
Iden. Where?
Fritz. In a most immense inheritance.
The late Count Siegendorf, his distant kinsman,
Is dead near Prague, in his castle, and my lord
Is on his way to take possession.
Iden. Was there
No heir?
Fritz. Oh, yes; but he has disappear'd
Long from the world's eye, and perhaps the world.
A prodigal son, beneath his father's ban
For the last twenty years; for whom his sire
Refused to kill the fatted calf; and, therefore,
If living he must chew the husks still. But
The baron would find means to silence him,
Were he to re-appear: he 's politic,
And has much influence with a certain court.
Iden. He 's fortunate.
Fritz. 'T is true, there is a grandson,
Whom the late count reclaim'd from his son's hands,
And educated as his heir; but then
His birth is doubtful.
Iden. How so?
Fritz. His sire made
A left-hand, love, imprudent sort of marriage,
With an Italian exile's dark-eyed daughter:
Noble, they say, too; but no match for such
A house as Siegendorf's. The grandsire ill
Could brook the alliance; and could ne'er be brought
To see the parents, though he took the son.
Iden. If he 's a lad of mettle, he may yet
Dispute your claim, and weave a web that may
Puzzle your baron to unravel.
Fritz. Why,
For mettle, he has quite enough: they say,
He forms a happy mixture of his sire
And grandsire's qualities, — impetuous as
The former, and deep as the latter; but
The strangest is, that he too disappear'd
Some months ago.
Iden. The devil he did!
Fritz. Why, yes:
It must have been at his suggestion, at
An hour so critical as was the eve
Of the old man's death, whose heart was broken by it.

Iden. Was there no cause assign'd?
Fritz. Plenty, no doubt,
And none perhaps the true one. Some averr'd
It was to seek his parents; some because
The old man held his spirit in so strictly
(But that could scarce be, for he doted on him);
A third believed he wish'd to serve in war,
But, peace being made soon after his departure,
He might have since return'd were that the motive;
A fourth set charitably have surmised,
As there was something strange and mystic in him,
That in the wild exuberance of his nature
He had join'd the black bands, who lay waste Lusatia,
The mountains of Bohemia and Silesia,
Since the last years of war had dwindled into
A kind of general condottiero system
Of bandit warfare; each troop with its chief,
And all against mankind.
Iden. That cannot be.
A young heir, bred to wealth and luxury,
To risk his life and honours with disbanded
Soldiers and desperadoes!
Fritz. Heaven best knows!
But there are human natures so allied
Unto the savage love of enterprise,
That they will seek for peril as a pleasure.
I 've heard that nothing can reclaim your Indian,
Or tame the tiger, though their infancy
Were fed on milk and honey. After all,
Your Wallenstein, your Tilly and Gustavus,
Your Bannier, and your Torstenson and Weimar,
Were but the same thing upon a grand scale;
And now that they are gone, and peace proclaim'd,
They who would follow the same pastime must
Pursue it on their own account. Here comes
The baron, and the Saxon stranger, who
Was his chief aid in yesterday's escape,
But did not leave the cottage by the Oder
Until this morning.

Enter Stralenheim *and* Ulric.

Stral. Since you have refused
All compensation, gentle stranger, save
Inadequate thanks, you almost check even them,
Making me feel the worthlessness of words,
And blush at my own barren gratitude,
They seem so niggardly, compared with what
Your courteous courage did in my behalf —
Ulr. I pray you press the theme no further.
Stral. But
Can I not serve you? You are young, and of
That mould which throws out heroes; fair in favour;
Brave, I know, by my living now to say so;
And doubtlessly, with such a form and heart,
Would look into the fiery eyes of war,
As ardently for glory as you dared
An obscure death to save an unknown stranger
In an as perilous, but opposite, element.
You are made for the service: I have served;
Have rank by birth and soldiership, and friends
Who shall be yours. 'T is true this pause of peace
Favours such views at present scantily;
But 't will not last, men's spirits are too stirring;
And, after thirty years of conflict, peace
Is but a petty war, as the times show us
In every forest, or a mere arm'd truce.
War will reclaim his own; and, in the meantime,
You might obtain a post, which would ensure
A higher soon, and, by my influence, fail not
To rise. I speak of Brandenburg, wherein
I stand well with the elector; in Bohemia,
Like you, I am a stranger, and we are now
Upon its frontier.
Ulr. You perceive my garb
Is Saxon, and of course my service due
To my own sovereign. If I must decline
Your offer, 't is with the same feeling which
Induced it.
Stral. Why, this is mere usury!
I owe my life to you, and you refuse
The acquittance of the interest of the debt,
To heap more obligations on me till
I bow beneath them.
Ulr. You shall say so when
I claim the payment.

Stral. Well, sir, since you will not —
You are nobly born ?
Ulr. I have heard my kinsmen say so.
Stral. Your actions show it. Might I ask your name ?
Ulr. Ulric.
Stral. Your house's ?
Ulr. When I'm worthy of it,
I'll answer you.
Stral. (*aside*). Most probably an Austrian,
Whom these unsettled times forbid to boast
His lineage on these wild and dangerous frontiers,
Where the name of his country is abhorr'd.
[*Aloud to* Fritz *and* Idenstein.
So, sirs ! how have ye sped in your researches ?
Iden. Indifferent well, your excellency.
Stral. Then
I am to deem the plunderer is caught ?
Iden. Humph ! — not exactly.
Stral. Or at least suspected ?
Iden. Oh ! for that matter, very much suspected.
Stral. Who may he be ?
Iden. Why, don't *you* know, my lord?
Stral. How should I ? I was fast asleep.
Iden. And so
Was I, and that's the cause I know no more
Than does your excellency.
Stral. Dolt !
Iden. Why, if
Your lordship, being robb'd, don't recognise
The rogue; how should I, not being robb'd, identify
The thief among so many ? In the crowd,
May it please your excellency, your thief looks
Exactly like the rest, or rather better:
'T is only at the bar and in the dungeon
That wise men know your felon by his features;
But I'll engage, that if seen there but once,
Whether he be found criminal or no,
His face shall be so.
Stral. (*to* Fritz). Prithee, Fritz, inform me
What hath been done to trace the fellow?
Fritz. Faith !
My lord, not much as yet, except conjecture.
Stral. Besides the loss (which, I must own, affects me
Just now materially), I needs would find
The villain out of public motives; for
So dexterous a spoiler, who could creep
Through my attendants, and so many peopled
And lighted chambers, on my rest, and snatch
The gold before my scarce-closed eyes, would soon
Leave bare your borough, Sir Intendant !
Iden. True;
If there were aught to carry off, my lord.
Ulr. What is all this ?
Stral. You join'd us but this morning,
And have not heard that I was robb'd last night.
Ulr. Some rumour of it reach'd me as I pass'd
The outer chambers of the palace, but
I know no further.
Stral. It is a strange business;
The intendant can inform you of the facts.
Iden. Most willingly. You see —
Stral. (*impatiently*). Defer your tale,
Till certain of the hearer's patience.
Iden. That
Can only be approved by proofs. You see —
Stral. (*again interrupting him, and addressing* Ulric). In short, I was asleep upon a chair,
My cabinet before me with some gold
Upon it (more than I much like to lose,
Though in part only): some ingenious person
Contrived to glide through all my own attendants,
Besides those of the place, and bore away
A hundred golden ducats, which to find
I would be fain, and there 's an end. Perhaps
You (as I still am rather faint) would add
To yesterday's great obligation, this,
Though slighter, yet not slight, to aid these men
(Who seem but lukewarm) in recovering it ?
Ulr. Most willingly, and without loss of time —
(*To* Idenstein.) Come hither, mynheer !
Iden. But so much haste bodes
Right little speed, and —
Ulr. Standing motionless
None; so let's march: we'll talk as we go on.
Iden. But —
Ulr. Show the spot, and then I'll answer you.
Fritz. I will, sir, with his excellency's leave.

Stral. Do so, and take yon old ass with you.
Fritz. Hence !
Ulr. Come on, old oracle, expound thy riddle ! [*Exit with* Idenstein *and* Fritz.
Stral. (*solus*). A stalwart, active, soldier-looking stripling,
Handsome as Hercules ere his first labour,
And with a brow of thought beyond his years
When in repose, till his eye kindles up
In answering yours. I wish I could engage him;
I have need of some such spirits near me now,
For this inheritance is worth a struggle.
And though I am not the man to yield without one,
Neither are they who now rise up between me
And my desire. The boy, they say, 's a bold one;
But he hath play'd the truant in some hour
Of freakish folly, leaving fortune to
Champion his claims. That 's well. The father whom
For years I 've track'd, as does the bloodhound, never
In sight, but constantly in scent, had put me
To fault; but *here* I *have* him, and that 's better.
It must be *he!* All circumstance proclaims it;
And careless voices, knowing not the cause
Of my inquiries, still confirm it. — Yes !
The man, his bearing, and the mystery
Of his arrival, and the time; the account, too,
The intendant gave (for I have not beheld her)
Of his wife's dignified but foreign aspect;
Besides the antipathy with which we met,
As snakes and lions shrink back from each other
By secret instinct that both must be foes
Deadly, without being natural prey to either;
All — all — confirm it to my mind. However,
We 'll grapple, ne'er the less. In a few hours
The order comes from Frankfort, if these waters
Rise not the higher (and the weather favours
Their quick abatement), and I 'll have him safe
Within a dungeon, where he may avouch
His real estate and name; and there 's no harm done,
Should he prove other than I deem. This robbery
(Save for the actual loss) is lucky also:
He 's poor, and that 's suspicious — he 's unknown,
And that 's defenceless. — True, we have no proofs
Of guilt, — but what hath he of innocence ?
Were he a man indifferent to my prospects,
In other bearings, I should rather lay
The inculpation on the Hungarian, who
Hath something which I like not; and alone
Of all around, except the intendant and
The prince's household and my own, had ingress
Familiar to the chamber.

Enter Gabor.

Friend, how fare you ?
Gab. As those who fare well everywhere, when they
Have supp'd and slumber'd, no great matter how —
And you, my lord ?
Stral. Better in rest than purse:
Mine inn is like to cost me dear.
Gab. I heard
Of your late loss; but 't is a trifle to
One of your order.
Stral. You would hardly think so,
Were the loss yours.
Gab. I never had so much
(At once) in my whole life, and therefore am not
Fit to decide. But I came here to seek you.
Your couriers are turn'd back — I have outstripp'd them,
In my return.
Stral. You ! — Why ?
Gab. I went at daybreak,
To watch for the abatement of the river,
As being anxious to resume my journey.
Your messengers were all check'd like myself;
And, seeing the case hopeless, I await
The current's pleasure.
Stral. Would the dogs were in it !
Why did they not, at least, attempt the passage ?
I order'd this at all risks.
Gab. Could you order
The Oder to divide, as Moses did

The Red Sea (scarcely redder than the flood
Of the swoln stream), and be obey'd, perhaps
They might have ventured.
Stral. I must see to it:
The knaves! the slaves! — but they shall smart for this. [*Exit* STRALENHEIM.
Gab. (*solus*). There goes my noble, feudal, self-will'd baron!
Epitomè of what brave chivalry
The preux chevaliers of the good old times
Have left us. Yesterday he would have given
His lands (if he hath any), and, still dearer,
His sixteen quarterings, for as much fresh air
As would have fill'd a bladder, while he lay
Gurgling and foaming half way through the window
Of his o'erset and water-logg'd conveyance;
And now he storms at half a dozen wretches,
Because they love their lives too! Yet, he 's right:
'T is strange they should, when such as he may put them
To hazard at his pleasure. Oh, thou world!
Thou art indeed a melancholy jest!
[*Exit* GABOR.

SCENE II

The Apartment of WERNER, *in the Palace.*

Enter JOSEPHINE *and* ULRIC.

Jos. Stand back, and let me look on thee again!
My Ulric! — my beloved! — can it be —
After twelve years?
Ulr. My dearest mother!
Jos. Yes!
My dream is realised — how beautiful! —
How more than all I sigh'd for! Heaven receive
A mother's thanks! — a mother's tears of joy!
This is indeed thy work! — At such an hour, too,
He comes not only as a son, but saviour.
Ulr. If such a joy await me, it must double
What I now feel, and lighten from my heart
A part of the long debt of duty, not
Of love (for that was ne'er withheld) — forgive me!
This long delay was not my fault.
Jos. I know it,
But cannot think of sorrow now, and doubt
If I e'er felt it, 't is so dazzled from
My memory by this oblivious transport! —
My son!

Enter WERNER.

Wer. What have we here, — more strangers?
Jos. No!
Look upon him! What do you see?
Wer. A stripling,
For the first time —
Ulr. (*kneeling*). For twelve long years, my father!
Wer. Oh, God!
Jos. He faints!
Wer. No — I am better now —
Ulric! (*Embraces him.*)
Ulr. My father, Siegendorf!
Wer. (*starting*). Hush! boy —
The walls may hear that name!
Ulr. What then?
Wer. Why, then —
But we will talk of that anon. Remember,
I must be known here but as Werner. Come!
Come to my arms again! Why, thou look'st all
I should have been, and was not. Josephine,
Sure 't is no father's fondness dazzles me;
But, had I seen that form amid ten thousand
Youth of the choicest, my heart would have chosen
This for my son!
Ulr. And yet you knew me not!
Wer. Alas! I have had that upon my soul
Which makes me look on all men with an eye
That only knows the evil at first glance.
Ulr. My memory served me far more fondly: I
Have not forgotten aught; and oft-times in
The proud and princely halls of (I 'll not name them,
As you say that 't is perilous) — but 'i the pomp
Of your sire's feudal mansion, I look'd back
To the Bohemian mountains many a sunset,
And wept to see another day go down
O'er thee and me, with those huge hills between us.
They shall not part us more.
Wer. I know not that.
Are you aware my father is no more?

Ulr. Oh, heavens! I left him in a green old age,
And looking like the oak, worn, but still steady
Amidst the elements, whilst younger trees
Fell fast around him. 'T was scarce three months since.
Wer. Why did you leave him?
Jos. (*embracing* Ulric). Can you ask that question?
Is he not *here?*
Wer. True: he hath sought his parents,
And found them; but, oh! *how*, and in what state!
Ulr. All shall be better'd. What we have to do
Is to proceed, and to assert our rights,
Or rather yours; for I waive all, unless
Your father has disposed in such a sort
Of his broad lands as to make mine the foremost,
So that I must prefer my claim for form:
But I trust better, and that all is yours.
Wer. Have you not heard of Stralenheim?
Ulr. I saved
His life but yesterday: he 's here.
Wer. You saved
The serpent who will sting us all!
Ulr. You speak
Riddles: what is this *Stralenheim* to us?
Wer. Every thing. One who claims our fathers' lands;
Our distant kinsman, and our nearest foe.
Ulr. I never heard his name till now. The count,
Indeed, spoke sometimes of a kinsman, who,
If his own line should fail, might be remotely
Involved in the succession; but his titles
Were never named before me — and what then?
His right must yield to ours.
Wer. Ay, if at Prague:
But here he is all-powerful; and has spread
Snares for thy father, which, if hitherto
He hath escaped them, is by fortune, not
By favour.
Ulr. Doth he personally know you?
Wer. No; but he guesses shrewdly at my person,
As he betray'd last night; and I, perhaps,
But owe my temporary liberty
To his uncertainty.
Ulr. I think you wrong him
(Excuse me for the phrase); but Stralenheim
Is not what you prejudge him, or, if so,
He owes me something both for past and present.
I saved his life, he therefore trusts in me.
He hath been plunder'd too, since he came hither:
Is sick; a stranger; and as such not now
Able to trace the villain who hath robb'd him.
I have pledged myself to do so; and the business
Which brought me here was chiefly that. but I
Have found, in searching for another's dross,
My own whole treasure — you, my parents!
Wer. (*agitatedly*). Who
Taught you to mouth that name of 'villain'?
Ulr. What
More noble name belongs to common thieves?
Wer. Who taught you thus to brand an unknown being
With an infernal stigma?
Ulr. My own feelings
Taught me to name a ruffian from his deeds.
Wer. Who taught you, long-sought and ill-found boy! that
It would be safe for my own son to insult me?
Ulr. I named a villain. What is there in common
With such a being and my father?
Wer. Every thing!
That ruffian is thy father!
Jos. Oh, my son!
Believe him not — and yet! — (*her voice falters*).
Ulr. (*starts, looks earnestly at* Werner, *and then says slowly*) And you avow it?
Wer. Ulric, before you dare despise your father,
Learn to divine and judge his actions. Young,
Rash, new to life, and rear'd in luxury's lap,
Is it for you to measure passion's force,
Or misery's temptation? Wait (not long,
It cometh like the night, and quickly) —
Wait! —

Wait till, like me, your hopes are blighted, till
Sorrow and shame are handmaids of your cabin;
Famine and poverty your guests at table;
Despair your bed-fellow — then rise, but not
From sleep, and judge! Should that day e'er arrive —
Should you see then the serpent, who hath coil'd
Himself around all that is dear and noble
Of you and yours, lie slumbering in your path,
With but *his* folds between your steps and happiness,
When *he*, who lives but to tear from you name,
Lands, life itself, lies at your mercy, with
Chance your conductor; midnight for your mantle;
The bare knife in your hand, and earth asleep,
Even to your deadliest foe; and he, as 't were
Inviting death, by looking like it, while
His death alone can save you: — Thank your God!
If then, like me, content with petty plunder,
You turn aside — I did so.
Ulr. But —
Wer. (*abruptly*). Hear me!
I will not brook a human voice — scarce dare
Listen to my own (if that be human still) —
Hear me! you do not know this man — I do.
He 's mean, deceitful, avaricious. You
Deem yourself safe, as young and brave; but learn
None are secure from desperation, few
From subtilty. My worst foe, Stralenheim,
Housed in a prince's palace, couch'd within
A prince's chamber, lay below my knife!
An instant — a mere motion — the least impulse —
Had swept him and all fears of mine from earth.
He was within my power — my knife was raised —
Withdrawn — and I 'm in his: — are you not so?
Who tells you that he knows you *not?* Who says
He hath not lured you here to end you? or
To plunge you, with your parents, in a dungeon? [*He pauses.*
Ulr. Proceed — proceed!
Wer. *Me* he hath ever known,
And hunted through each change of time, name, fortune —
And why not *you?* Are you more versed in men?
He wound snares round me; flung along my path
Reptiles, whom in my youth I would have spurn'd
Even from my presence; but, in spurning now,
Fill only with fresh venom. Will you be
More patient? Ulric! — Ulric! — there are crimes
Made venial by the occasion, and temptations
Which nature cannot master or forbear.
Ulr. (*looks first at him, and then at* Josephine).
My mother!
Wer. Ay! I thought so: you have now
Only one parent. I have lost alike
Father and son, and stand alone.
Ulr. But stay!
[Werner *rushes out of the chamber.*
Jos. (*to Ulric*). Follow him not, until this storm of passion
Abates. Think'st thou, that were it well for him,
I had not follow'd?
Ulr. I obey you, mother,
Although reluctantly. My first act shall not
Be one of disobedience.
Jos. Oh, he is good!
Condemn him not from his own mouth, but trust
To me, who have borne so much with him, and for him,
That this is but the surface of his soul,
And that the depth is rich in better things.
Ulr. These then are but my father's principles?
My mother thinks not with him?
Jos. Nor doth he
Think as he speaks. Alas! long years of grief
Have made him sometimes thus.
Ulr. Explain to me
More clearly, then, these claims of Stralenheim.

That, when I see the subject in its bearings,
I may prepare to face him, or at least
To extricate you from your present perils.
I pledge myself to accomplish this — but would
I had arrived a few hours sooner!
Jos. Ay!
Hadst thou but done so!

Enter Gabor *and* Idenstein *with Attendants.*

Gab. (*to Ulric*). I have sought you, comrade.
So this is my reward!
Ulr. What do you mean?
Gab. 'Sdeath! have I lived to these years, and for this!
(*To* Idenstein.) But for your age and folly I would —
Iden. Help!
Hands off! Touch an intendant!
Gab. Do not think
I'll honour you so much as save your throat
From the Ravenstone by choking you myself.
Iden. I thank you for the respite: but there are
Those who have greater need of it than me.
Ulr. Unriddle this vile wrangling, or —
Gab. At once, then,
The baron has been robb'd, and upon me
This worthy personage has deign'd to fix
His kind suspicions — me! whom he ne'er saw
Till yester' evening.
Iden. Wouldst have me suspect
My own acquaintances? You have to learn
That I keep better company.
Gab. You shall
Keep the best shortly, and the last for all men,
The worms! you hound of malice!
[Gabor *seizes on him.*
Ulr. (*interfering*). Nay, no violence:
He's old, unarm'd — be temperate, Gabor!
Gab. (*letting go* Idenstein). True:
I am a fool to lose myself because
Fools deem me knave: it is their homage.
Ulr. (*to* Idenstein). How
Fare you?
Iden. Help!
Ulr. I *have* help'd you.
Iden. Kill him! then
I'll say so.
Gab. I am calm — live on!
Iden. That's more
Than you shall do, if there be judge or judgment
In Germany. The baron shall decide!
Gab. Does *he* abet you in your accusation?
Iden. Does he not?
Gab. Then next time let him go sink
Ere I go hang for snatching him from drowning.
But here he comes!

Enter Stralenheim.

Gab. (*goes up to him*). My noble lord, I'm here!
Stral. Well, sir!
Gab. Have you aught with me?
Stral. What should I
Have with you?
Gab. You know best, if yesterday's
Flood has not wash'd away your memory;
But that's a trifle. I stand here accused,
In phrases not equivocal, by yon
Intendant, of the pillage of your person
Or chamber: — is the charge your own or his?
Stral. I accuse no man.
Gab. Then you acquit me, baron?
Stral. I know not whom to accuse, or to acquit,
Or scarcely to suspect.
Gab. But you at least
Should know whom *not* to suspect. I am insulted —
Oppress'd here by these menials, and I look
To you for remedy — teach them their duty!
To look for thieves at home were part of it,
If duly taught; but, in one word, if I
Have an accuser, let it be a man
Worthy to be so of a man like me.
I am your equal.
Stral. You!
Gab. Ay, sir; and, for
Aught that you know, superior; but proceed —
I do not ask for hints, and surmises,
And circumstance, and proofs; I know enough
Of what I have done for you, and what you owe me,
To have at least waited your payment rather
Than paid myself, had I been eager of
Your gold. I also know, that were I even
The villain I am deem'd, the service render'd

So recently would not permit you to
Pursue me to the death, except through shame,
Such as would leave your scutcheon but a blank.
But this is nothing: I demand of you
Justice upon your unjust servants, and
From your own lips a disavowal of
All sanction of their insolence; thus much
You owe to the unknown, who asks no more,
And never thought to have ask’d so much.
Stral. This tone
May be of innocence.
Gab. ’Sdeath ! who dare doubt it,
Except such villains as ne’er had it ?
Stral. You
Are hot, sir !
Gab. Must I turn an icicle
Before the breath of menials, and their master ?
Stral. Ulric ! you know this man; I found him in
Your company.
Gab. We found *you* in the Oder;
Would we had left you there !
Stral. I give you thanks, sir.
Gab. I ’ve earn’d them; but might have earn’d more from others,
Perchance, if I had left you to your fate.
Stral. Ulric ! you know this man ?
Gab. No more than you do,
If he avouches not my honour.
Ulr. I
Can vouch your courage, and, as far as my
Own brief connection led me, honour.
Stral. Then
I ’m satisfied.
Gab. (*ironically*). Right easily, methinks.
What is the spell in his asseveration
More than in mine ?
Stral. I merely said that *I*
Was satisfied — not that you are absolved.
Gab. Again ! Am I accused or no ?
Stral. Go to !
You wax too insolent. If circumstance
And general suspicion be against you,
Is the fault mine ? Is ’t not enough that I
Decline all question of your guilt or innocence ?
Gab. My lord, my lord, this is mere cozenage,
A vile equivocation; you well know
Your doubts are certainties to all around you —
Your looks a voice — your frowns a sentence; you
Are practising your power on me, because
You have it; but beware ! you know not whom
You strive to tread on.
Stral. Threat’st thou ?
Gab. Not so much
As you accuse. You hint the basest injury,
And I retort it with an open warning.
Stral. As you have said, ’t is true I owe you something,
For which you seem disposed to pay yourself.
Gab. Not with your gold.
Stral. With bootless insolence.
[*To his Attendants and* IDENSTEIN.
You need not further to molest this man,
But let him go his way. Ulric, good morrow !
[*Exit* STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, *and Attendants.*
Gab. (*following*). I ’ll after him and —
Ulr. (*stopping him*). Not a step.
Gab. Who shall
Oppose me ?
Ulr. Your own reason, with a moment’s
Thought.
Gab. Must I bear this ?
Ulr. Pshaw ! we all must bear
The arrogance of something higher than
Ourselves — the highest cannot temper Satan,
Nor the lowest his vicegerents upon earth.
I ’ve seen you brave the elements, and bear
Things which had made this silkworm cast his skin —
And shrink you from a few sharp sneers and words ?
Gab. Must I bear to be deem’d a thief ? If ’t were
A bandit of the woods, I could have borne it —
There ’s something daring in it; — but to steal
The moneys of a slumbering man ! —
Ulr. It seems, then,
You are *not* guilty ?
Gab. Do I hear aright ?
You too !
Ulr. I merely ask’d a simple question.
Gab. If the judge ask’d me, I would answer ‘ No ’ —
To you I answer *thus*. (*He draws.*)
Ulr. (*drawing*). With all my heart !

Jos. Without there! Ho! help! help! Oh, God! here 's murder!
[*Exit* Josephine *shrieking.*
[Gabor *and* Ulric *fight.* Gabor *is disarmed just as* Stralenheim, Josephine, Idenstein, *etc.*, *re-enter.*
Jos. Oh, glorious heaven! He 's safe!
Stral. (*to Josephine*). *Who* 's safe?
Jos. My —
Ulr. (*interrupting her with a stern look, and turning afterwards to* Stralenheim). Both!
Here 's no great harm done.
Stral. What hath caused all this?
Ulr. *You*, baron, I believe; but as the effect
Is harmless, let it not disturb you. — Gabor!
There is your sword; and when you bare it next,
Let it not be against your *friends*.
[Ulric *pronounces the last words slowly and emphatically in a low voice to* Gabor.
Gab. I thank you
Less for my life than for your counsel.
Stral. These
Brawls must end here.
Gab. (*taking his sword*). They *shall*. You have wrong'd me, Ulric,
More with your unkind thoughts than sword: I would
The last were in my bosom rather than
The first in yours. I could have borne yon noble's
Absurd insinuations — ignorance
And dull suspicion are a part of his
Entail will last him longer than his lands.
But I may fit *him* yet: — you have vanquish'd me.
I was the fool of passion to conceive
That I could cope with you, whom I had seen
Already proved by greater perils than
Rest in this arm. We may meet by and by,
However — but in friendship. [*Exit* Gabor.
Stral. I will brook
No more! This outrage following up his insults,
Perhaps his guilt, has cancell'd all the little
I owed him heretofore for the so-vaunted
Aid which he added to your abler succour.
Ulric, you are not hurt?
Ulr. Not even by a scratch.
Stral. (*to* Idenstein). Intendant! take your measures to secure
Yon fellow: I revoke my former lenity.
He shall be sent to Frankfort with an escort
The instant that the waters have abated.
Iden. Secure him! He hath got his sword again —
And seems to know the use on 't; 't is his trade,
Belike; — I 'm a civilian.
Stral. Fool! are not
Yon score of vassals dogging at your heels
Enough to seize a dozen such? Hence! after him!
Ulr. Baron, I do beseech you!
Stral. I must be
Obey'd. No words!
Iden. Well, if it must be so —
March, vassals! I 'm your leader, and will bring
The rear up: a wise general never should
Expose his precious life — on which all rests.
I like that article of war.
[*Exit* Idenstein *and Attendants.*
Stral. Come hither,
Ulric: what does that woman here? Oh! now
I recognise her, 't is the stranger's wife
Whom they *name* 'Werner.'
Ulr. 'T is his name.
Stral. Indeed!
Is not your husband visible, fair dame? —
Jos. Who seeks him?
Stral. No one — for the present: but
I fain would parley, Ulric, with yourself
Alone.
Ulr. I will retire with you.
Jos. Not so:
You are the latest stranger, and command
All places here.
(*Aside to* Ulric, *as she goes out.*) O Ulric! have a care —
Remember what depends on a rash word!
Ulr. (*to* Josephine). Fear not!
[*Exit* Josephine.
Stral. Ulric,
I think that I may trust you:
You saved my life — and acts like these beget
Unbounded confidence.
Ulr. Say on.
Stral. Mysterious
And long-engender'd circumstances (not
To be now fully enter'd on) have made
This man obnoxious — perhaps fatal to me.
Ulr. Who? Gabor, the Hungarian?

Stral. No — this 'Werner' —
With the false name and habit.
Ulr. How can this be?
He is the poorest of the poor — and yellow
Sickness sits cavern'd in his hollow eye:
The man is helpless.
Stral. He is — 't is no matter;
But if he be the man I deem (and that
He is so, all around us here — and much
That is not here — confirm my apprehension)
He must be made secure ere twelve hours further.
Ulr. And what have I to do with this?
Stral. I have sent
To Frankfort, to the governor, my friend
(I have the authority to do so by
An order of the house of Brandenburg),
For a fit escort — but this cursèd flood
Bars all access, and may do for some hours.
Ulr. It is abating.
Stral. That is well.
Ulr. But how
Am I concern'd?
Stral. As one who did so much
For me, you cannot be indifferent to
That which is of more import to me than
The life you rescued. — Keep your eye on *him!*
The man avoids me, knows that I now know him.
Watch him! — as you would watch the wild boar when
He makes against you in the hunter's gap —
Like him he must be spear'd.
Ulr. Why so?
Stral. He stands
Between me and a brave inheritance!
Oh, could you see it! But you shall.
Ulr. I hope so.
Stral. It is the richest of the rich Bohemia,
Unscathed by scorching war. It lies so near
The strongest city, Prague, that fire and sword
Have skimm'd it lightly: so that now, besides
Its own exuberance, it bears double value,
Confronted with whole realms far and near
Made deserts.
Ulr. You describe it faithfully.
Stral. Ay — could you see it, you would say so — but,
As I have said, you shall.
Ulr. I accept the omen.
Stral. Then claim a recompense from it and me,
Such as *both* may make worthy your acceptance
And services to me and mine for ever.
Ulr. And this sole, sick, and miserable wretch —
This way-worn stranger — stands between you and
This Paradise? — (As Adam did between
The devil and his) — [*Aside.*]
Stral. He doth.
Ulr. Hath he no right?
Stral. Right! none. A disinherited prodigal,
Who for these twenty years disgraced his lineage
In all his acts — but chiefly by his marriage,
And living amidst commerce-fetching burghers,
And dabbling merchants, in a mart of Jews.
Ulr. He has a wife, then?
Stral. You 'd be sorry to
Call such your mother. You have seen the woman
He *calls* his wife.
Ulr. Is she not so?
Stral. No more
Than he 's your father; — an Italian girl,
The daughter of a banish'd man, who lives
On love and poverty with this same Werner.
Ulr. They are childless, then?
Stral. There is or was a bastard,
Whom the old man — the grandsire (as old age
Is ever doting) took to warm his bosom,
As it went chilly downward to the grave:
But the imp stands not in my path — he has fled,
No one knows whither; and if he had not,
His claims alone were too contemptible
To stand. — Why do you smile?
Ulr. At your vain fears:
A poor man almost in his grasp, a child
Of doubtful birth, can startle a grandee!
Stral. All 's to be fear'd, where all is to be gain'd.
Ulr. True; and aught done to save or to obtain it.
Stral. You have harp'd the very string next to my heart.
I may depend upon you?
Ulr. 'T were too late
To doubt it.
Stral. Let no foolish pity shake

Your bosom (for the appearance of the man
Is pitiful) — he is a wretch, as likely
To have robb'd me as the fellow more suspected,
Except that circumstance is less against him;
He being lodged far off, and in a chamber
Without approach to mine. And, to say truth,
I think too well of blood allied to mine,
To deem he would descend to such an act:
Besides, he was a soldier, and a brave one
Once — though too rash.
Ulr. And they, my lord, we know
By our experience, never plunder till
They knock the brains out first — which makes them heirs,
Not thieves. The dead, who feel nought, can lose nothing,
Nor e'er be robb'd: their spoils are a bequest —
No more.
Stral. Go to! you are a wag. But say
I may be sure you'll keep an eye on this man,
And let me know his slightest movement towards
Concealment or escape?
Ulr. You may be sure
You yourself could not watch him more than I
Will be his sentinel.
Stral. By this you make me
Yours, and for ever.
Ulr. Such is my intention.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III

Scene I

A Hall in the same Palace, from whence the secret Passage leads.

Enter Werner *and* Gabor.

Gab. Sir, I have told my tale: if it so please you
To give me refuge for a few hours, well —
If not, I'll try my fortune elsewhere.
Wer. How
Can I, so wretched, give to Misery
A shelter? — wanting such myself as much
As e'er the hunted deer a covert —
Gab. Or
The wounded lion his cool cave. Methinks
You rather look like one would turn at bay,
And rip the hunter's entrails.
Wer. Ah!
Gab. I care not
If it be so, being much disposed to do
The same myself. But will you shelter me?
I am oppress'd like you, and poor like you,
Disgraced —
Wer. (*abruptly*). Who told you that I was disgraced?
Gab. No one; nor did I say *you* were so: with
Your poverty my likeness ended; but
I said *I* was so — and would add, with truth,
As undeservedly as *you*.
Wer. Again!
As *I*?
Gab. Or any other honest man.
What the devil would you have? You don't believe me
Guilty of this base theft?
Wer. No, no — I cannot.
Gab. Why, that's my heart of honour! yon young gallant,
Your miserly intendant, and dense noble,
All — all suspected me; and why? because
I am the worst-clothed and least named amongst them;
Although, were Momus' lattice in your breasts,
My soul might brook to open it more widely
Than theirs: but thus it is — you poor and helpless,
Both still more than myself.
Wer. How know you that?
Gab. You're right: I ask for shelter at the hand
Which I call helpless; if you now deny it,
I were well paid. But you, who seem to have proved
The wholesome bitterness of life, know well,
By sympathy, that all the outspread gold
Of the New World the Spaniard boasts about
Could never tempt the man who knows its worth,
Weigh'd at its proper value in the balance,
Save in such guise (and there I grant its power,
Because I feel it) as may leave no nightmare
Upon his heart o' nights.
Wer. What do you mean?
Gab. Just what I say; I thought my speech was plain.
You are no thief, nor I; and, as true men,
Should aid each other.
Wer. It is a damn'd world, sir.
Gab. So is the nearest of the two next, as

The priests say (and no doubt they should know best);
Therefore I'll stick by this, as being loth
To suffer martyrdom, at least with such
An epitaph as larceny upon my tomb.
It is but a night's lodging which I crave;
To-morrow I will try the waters as
The dove did, trusting that they have abated.
Wer. Abated? Is there hope of that?
Gab. There was
At noontide.
Wer. Then we may be safe.
Gab. Are *you*
In peril?
Wer. Poverty is ever so.
Gab. That I know by long practice. Will you not
Promise to make mine less?
Wer. Your poverty?
Gab. No, you don't look a leech for that disorder;
I meant my peril only: you've a roof,
And I have none; I merely seek a covert.
Wer. Rightly; for how should such a wretch as I
Have gold?
Gab. Scarce honestly, to say the truth on't,
Although I almost wish you had the baron's.
Wer. Dare you insinuate?
Gab. What?
Wer. Are you aware
To whom you speak?
Gab. No; and I am not used
Greatly to care. (*A noise heard without.*) But hark! they come!
Wer. Who come?
Gab. The intendant and his man-hounds after me:
I'd face them — but it were in vain to expect
Justice at hands like theirs. Where shall I go?
But show me any place. I do assure you,
If there be faith in man, I am most guiltless:
Think if it were your own case!
Wer. (*aside*). Oh, just God!
Thy hell is not hereafter! Am I dust still?
Gab. I see you're moved; and it shows well in you:
I may live to requite it.
Wer. Are you not
A spy of Stralenheim's?
Gab. Not I! and if
I were, what is there to espy in you?
Although, I recollect, his frequent question
About you and your spouse might lead to some
Suspicion; but you best know — what — and why.
I am his deadliest foe.
Wer. You?
Gab. After such
A treatment for the service which in part
I render'd him, I am his enemy:
If you are not his friend, you will assist me.
Wer. I will.
Gab. But how?
Wer. (*showing the panel*). There is a secret spring:
Remember, I discover'd it by chance,
And used it but for safety.
Gab. Open it,
And I will use it for the same.
Wer. I found it,
As I have said: it leads through winding walls
(So thick as to bear paths within their ribs,
Yet lose no jot of strength or stateliness),
And hollow cells, and obscure niches, to
I know not whither; you must not advance:
Give me your word.
Gab. It is unnecessary:
How should I make my way in darkness through
A Gothic labyrinth of unknown windings?
Wer. Yes, but who knows to what place it may lead?
I know not (mark you!) — but who knows it might not
Lead even into the chamber of your foe?
So strangely were contrived these galleries
By our Teutonic fathers in old days,
When man built less against the elements
Than his next neighbour. You must not advance
Beyond the two first windings; if you do
(Albeit I never pass'd them), I'll not answer
For what you may be led to.
Gab. But I will.
A thousand thanks!
Wer. You'll find the spring more obvious
On the other side; and, when you would return,
It yields to the least touch.
Gab. I'll in — farewell!
[Gabor *goes in by the secret panel.*

Wer. (*solus*). What have I done? Alas! what *had* I done
Before to make this fearful? Let it be
Still some atonement that I save the man
Whose sacrifice had saved perhaps my own —
They come! to seek elsewhere what is before them!

Enter IDENSTEIN *and Others.*

Iden. Is he not here? He must have vanish'd then
Through the dim Gothic glass by pious aid
Of pictured saints upon the red and yellow
Casements, through which the sunset streams like sunrise
On long pearl-colour'd beards and crimson crosses,
And gilded crosiers, and cross'd arms, and cowls,
And helms, and twisted armour, and long swords,
All the fantastic furniture of windows
Dim with brave knights and holy hermits, whose
Likeness and fame alike rest in some panes
Of crystal which each rattling wind proclaims
As frail as any other life or glory.
He 's gone, however.
Wer. Whom do you seek?
Iden. A villain.
Wer. Why need you come so far, then?
Iden. In the search
Of him who robb'd the baron.
Wer. Are you sure
You have divined the man?
Iden. As sure as you
Stand there: but where 's he gone?
Wer. Who?
Iden. He we sought.
Wer. You see he is not here.
Iden. And yet we traced him
Up to this hall. Are you accomplices?
Or deal you in the black art?
Wer. I deal plainly,
To many men the blackest.
Iden. It may be
I have a question or two for yourself
Hereafter; but we must continue now
Our search for t' other.
Wer. You had best begin
Your inquisition now: I may not be
So patient always.
Iden. I should like to know,
In good sooth, if you really are the man
That Stralenheim's in quest of.
Wer. Insolent!
Said you not that he was not here?
Iden. Yes, *one;*
But there 's another whom he tracks more keenly,
And soon, it may be, with authority
Both paramount to his and mine. But come!
Bustle, my boys! we are at fault.
[*Exit* IDENSTEIN *and Attendants.*
Wer. In what
A maze hath my dim destiny involved me!
And one base sin hath done me less ill than
The leaving undone one far greater. Down,
Thou busy devil, rising in my heart!
Thou art too late! I 'll nought to do with blood.

Enter ULRIC.

Ulr. I sought you, father.
Wer. Is 't not dangerous?
Ulr. No; Stralenheim is ignorant of all
Or any of the ties between us; more —
He sends me here a spy upon your actions,
Deeming me wholly his.
Wer. I cannot think it;
'T is but a snare he winds about us both,
To swoop the sire and son at once.
Ulr. I can not
Pause in each petty fear, and stumble at
The doubts that rise like briers in our path,
But must break through them, as an unarm'd carle
Would, though with naked limbs, were the wolf rustling
In the same thicket where he hew'd for bread.
Nets are for thrushes, eagles are not caught so;
We 'll overfly or rend them.
Wer. Show me *how?*
Ulr. Can you not guess?
Wer. I cannot.
Ulr. That is strange.
Came the thought ne'er into your mind *last night?*
Wer. I understand you not.
Ulr. Then we shall never
More understand each other. But to change
The topic —
Wer. You mean to *pursue* it, as
'T is of our safety.
Ulr. Right; I stand corrected.

I see the subject now more clearly, and
Our general situation in its bearings.
The waters are abating; a few hours
Will bring his summon'd myrmidons from Frankfort,
When you will be a prisoner, perhaps worse,
And I an outcast, bastardised by practice
Of this same baron to make way for him.
Wer. And now your remedy! I thought to escape
By means of this accursèd gold; but now
I dare not use it, show it, scarce look on it.
Methinks it wears upon its face my guilt
For motto, not the mintage of the state;
And, for the sovereign's head, my own begirt
With hissing snakes, which curl around my temples
And cry to all beholders, Lo! a villain!
Ulr. You must not use it, at least now; but take
This ring. [*He gives* Werner *a jewel.*
Wer. A gem! It was my father's!
Ulr. And
As such is now your own. With this you must
Bribe the intendant for his old caleche
And horses to pursue your route at sunrise,
Together with my mother.
Wer. And leave you,
So lately found, in peril too?
Ulr. Fear nothing!
The only fear were if we fled together,
For that would make our ties beyond all doubt.
The waters only lie in flood between
This burgh and Frankfort; so far 's in our favour.
The route on to Bohemia, though encumber'd,
Is not impassable; and when you gain
A few hours' start, the difficulties will be
The same to your pursuers. Once beyond
The frontier, and you 're safe.
Wer. My noble boy!
Ulr. Hush! hush! no transports: we 'll indulge in them
In Castle Siegendorf! Display no gold:
Show Idenstein the gem (I know the man,
And have look'd through him): it will answer thus
A double purpose. Stralenheim lost *gold* —
No jewel: therefore it could *not* be his;
And then the man who was possest of this
Can hardly be suspected of abstracting
The baron's coin, when he could thus convert
This ring to more than Stralenheim has lost
By his last night's slumber. Be not over timid
In your address, nor yet too arrogant,
And Idenstein will serve you.
Wer. I will follow
In all things your direction.
Ulr. I would have
Spared you the trouble; but had I appear'd
To take an interest in you, and still more
By dabbling with a jewel in your favour,
All had been known at once.
Wer. My guardian angel!
This overpays the past. But how wilt thou
Fare in our absence?
Ulr. Stralenheim knows nothing
Of me as aught of kindred with yourself.
I will but wait a day or two with him
To lull all doubts, and then rejoin my father.
Wer. To part no more!
Ulr. I know not that; but at
The least we 'll meet again once more.
Wer. My boy!
My friend! my only child, and sole preserver!
Oh, do not hate me!
Ulr. Hate my father!
Wer. Ay,
My father hated me. Why not my son?
Ulr. Your father knew you not as I do.
Wer. Scorpions
Are in thy words! Thou know me? in this guise
Thou canst not know me, I am not myself;
Yet (hate me not) I will be soon.
Ulr. I 'll *wait!*
In the mean time be sure that all a son
Can do for parents shall be done for mine.
Wer. I see it, and I feel it; yet I feel
Further — that you despise me.
Ulr. Wherefore should I?
Wer. Must I repeat my humiliation?
Ulr. No!
I have fathom'd it and you. But let us talk
Of this no more. Or if it must be ever,
Not *now.* Your error has redoubled all
The present difficulties of our house,
At secret war with that of Stralenheim:

All we have now to think of is to baffle
Him. I have shown *one* way.
Wer. The only one,
And I embrace it, as I did my son
Who show'd *himself* and father's *safety* in
One day.
Ulr. You *shall* be safe: let that suffice.
Would Stralenheim's appearance in Bohemia
Disturb your right, or mine, if once we were
Admitted to our lands?
Wer. Assuredly,
Situate as we are now, although the first
Possessor might, as usual, prove the strongest,
Especially the next in blood.
Ulr. *Blood!* 't is
A word of many meanings; in the veins,
And out of them, it is a different thing —
And so it should be, when the same in blood
(As it is call'd) are aliens to each other,
Like Theban brethren: when a part is bad,
A few spilt ounces purify the rest.
Wer. I do not apprehend you.
Ulr. That may be —
And should, perhaps — and yet — but get ye ready;
You and my mother must away to-night.
Here comes the intendant: sound him with the gem;
'T will sink into his venal soul like lead
Into the deep, and bring up slime and mud,
And ooze too, from the bottom, as the lead doth
With its greased understratum; but no less
Will serve to warn our vessels through these shoals.
The freight is rich, so heave the line in time!
Farewell! I scarce have time, but yet your *hand*,
My father! —
Wer. Let me embrace thee!
Ulr. We may be
Observed: subdue your nature to the hour!
Keep off from me as from your foe!
Wer. Accursed
Be he who is the stifling cause which smothers
The best and sweetest feeling of our hearts;
At such an hour too!
Ulr. Yes, curse — it will ease you!
Here is the intendant.

Enter Idenstein.

Master Idenstein,
How fare you in your purpose? Have you caught
The rogue?
Iden. No, faith!
Ulr. Well, there are plenty more:
You may have better luck another chase.
Where is the baron?
Iden. Gone back to his chamber:
And now I think on 't, asking after you
With nobly-born impatience.
Ulr. Your great men
Must be answer'd on the instant, as the bound
Of the stung steed replies unto the spur:
'T is well they have horses, too; for if they had not,
I fear that men must draw their chariots, as
They say kings did Sesostris.
Iden. Who was he?
Ulr. An old Bohemian — an imperial gipsy.
Iden. A gipsy or Bohemian, 't is the same,
For they pass by both names. And was he one?
Ulr. I 've heard so; but I must take leave. Intendant,
Your servant! — Werner (*to* Werner *slightly*), if that be your name,
Yours. [*Exit* Ulric.
Iden. A well-spoken, pretty-faced young man!
And prettily behaved! He knows his station,
You see, sir: how he gave to each his due
Precedence!
Wer. I perceived it, and applaud
His just discernment and your own.
Iden. That 's well —
That 's very well. You also know your place, too;
And yet I don't know that I know your place.
Wer. (*showing the ring*). Would this assist your knowledge?
Iden. How! — What! — Eh!
A jewel!
Wer. 'T is your own on one condition.
Iden. Mine! — Name it!
Wer. That hereafter you permit me
At thrice its value to redeem it: 't is
A family ring.
Iden. A family! — *yours!* — a gem!
I 'm breathless!

Wer. You must also furnish me
An hour ere daybreak with all means to quit
This place.
Iden. But is it real? Let me look on it:
Diamond, by all that 's glorious!
Wer. Come, I 'll trust you:
You have guess'd, no doubt, that I was born above
My present seeming.
Iden. I can't say I did,
Though this looks like it: this is the true breeding
Of gentle blood!
Wer. I have important reasons
For wishing to continue privily
My journey hence.
Iden. So then *you are* the man
Whom Stralenheim 's in quest of?
Wer. I am not;
But being taken for him might conduct
So much embarrassment to me just now,
And to the baron's self hereafter — 't is
To spare both that I would avoid all bustle.
Iden. Be you the man or no, 't is not my business;
Besides, I never should obtain the half
From this proud, niggardly noble, who would raise
The country for some missing bits of coin,
And never offer a precise reward —
But *this!* — another look!
Wer. Gaze on it freely;
At day-dawn it is yours.
Iden. Oh, thou sweet sparkler!
Thou more than stone of the philosopher!
Thou touchstone of Philosophy herself!
Thou bright eye of the Mine! thou load-star of
The soul! the true magnetic Pole to which
All hearts point duly north, like trembling needles!
Thou flaming Spirit of the Earth! which, sitting
High on the monarch's diadem, attractest
More worship than the majesty who sweats
Beneath the crown which makes his head ache, like
Millions of hearts which bleed to lend it lustre!
Shalt thou be mine? I am, methinks, already
A little king, a lucky alchymist!
A wise magician, who has bound the devil
Without the forfeit of his soul. But come,
Werner, or what else?
Wer. Call me Werner still;
You may yet know me by a loftier title.
Iden. I do believe in thee! thou art the spirit
Of whom I long have dream'd in a low garb —
But come, I 'll serve thee; thou shalt be as free
As air, despite the waters; let us hence:
I 'll show thee I am honest (oh, thou jewel!) —
Thou shalt be furnish'd, Werner, with such means
Of flight, that if thou wert a snail, not birds
Should overtake thee. — Let me gaze again!
I have a foster-brother in the mart
Of Hamburgh skill'd in precious stones. How many
Carats may it weigh? — Come, Werner, I will wing thee. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

STRALENHEIM'S *Chamber*.

STRALENHEIM *and* FRITZ.

Fritz. All 's ready, my good lord!
Stral. I am not sleepy,
And yet I must to bed; I fain would say
To rest, but something heavy on my spirit,
Too dull for wakefulness, too quick for slumber,
Sits on me as a cloud along the sky,
Which will not let the sunbeams through, nor yet
Descend in rain and end, but spreads itself
'Twixt earth and heaven, like envy between man
And man, an everlasting mist; — I will
Unto my pillow.
Fritz. May you rest there well!
Stral. I feel, and fear I shall.
Fritz. And wherefore fear?
Stral. I know not why, and therefore do fear more,
Because an undescribable — but 't is
All folly. Were the locks (as I desired)
Changed, to-day, of this chamber? for last night's
Adventure makes it needful.
Fritz. Certainly,
According to your order, and beneath
The inspection of myself and the young Saxon
Who saved your life. I think they call him 'Ulric.'

Stral. You *think!* you supercilious slave! what right
Have you to *tax your* memory, which should be
Quick, proud, and happy to retain the *name*
Of him who saved your master, as a litany
Whose daily repetition marks your duty.
Get hence! '*You think*'! indeed! you who stood still
Howling and dripping on the bank, whilst I
Lay dying, and the stranger dash'd aside
The roaring torrent, and restored me to
Thank him — and despise you. '*You think*'! and scarce
Can recollect his name! I will not waste
More words on you. Call me betimes.
Fritz. Good night!
I trust to-morrow will restore your lordship
To renovated strength and temper.
[*The scene closes.*

SCENE III

The secret Passage.

Gab. (*solus*). Four —
Five — six hours have I counted, like the guard
Of outposts on the never-merry clock:
That hollow tongue of time, which, even when
It sounds for joy, takes something from enjoyment
With every clang. 'T is a perpetual knell,
Though for a marriage-feast it rings: each stroke
Peals for a hope the less; the funeral note
Of Love deep-buried without resurrection
In the grave of Possession; while the knoll
Of long-lived parents finds a jovial echo
To triple Time in the son's ear.
I 'm cold —
I 'm dark; I 've blown my fingers — number'd o'er
And o'er my steps — and knock'd my head against
Some fifty buttresses — and roused the rats
And bats in general insurrection, till
Their cursèd pattering feet and whirling wings
Leave me scarce hearing for another sound.
A light! It is at distance (if I can
Measure in darkness distance); but it blinks
As through a crevice or a key-hole in
The inhibited direction: I must on,
Nevertheless, from curiosity.
A distant lamp-light is an incident
In such a den as this. Pray Heaven it lead me
To nothing that may tempt me! Else — Heaven aid me
To obtain or to escape it! Shining still!
Were it the star of Lucifer himself,
Or he himself girt with its beams, I could
Contain no longer. Softly! mighty well!
That corner's turn'd — so — ah! no! — right! it draws
Nearer. Here is a darksome angle — so,
That 's weather'd. Let me pause. Suppose it leads
Into some greater danger than that which
I have escaped — no matter, 't is a new one;
And novel perils, like fresh mistresses,
Wear more magnetic aspects: I will on,
And be it where it may — I have my dagger,
Which may protect me at a pinch. Burn still,
Thou little light! Thou art my *ignis fatuus!*
My stationary Will-o'-the-wisp! So! so!
He hears my invocation, and fails not.
[*The scene closes.*

SCENE IV

A Garden.

Enter WERNER.

Wer. I could not sleep — and now the hour 's at hand;
All 's ready. Idenstein has kept his word;
And station'd in the outskirts of the town,
Upon the forest's edge, the vehicle
Awaits us. Now the dwindling stars begin
To pale in heaven; and for the last time I
Look on these horrible walls. Oh, never, never
Shall I forget them! Here I came most poor,
But not dishonour'd: and I leave them with
A stain, — if not upon my name, yet in
My heart! — a never-dying canker-worm
Which all the coming splendour of the lands,
And rights, and sovereignty of Siegendorf
Can scarcely lull a moment. I must find
Some means of restitution, which would ease
My soul in part; but how without discovery? —

It must be done, however; and I 'll pause
Upon the method the first hour of safety.
The madness of my misery led to this
Base infamy; repentance must retrieve it.
I will have nought of Stralenheim's upon
My spirit, though he would grasp all of mine,
Lands, freedom, life,—and yet he sleeps as soundly,
Perhaps, as infancy, with gorgeous curtains
Spread for his canopy, o'er silken pillows,
Such as when—Hark! what noise is that? Again!
The branches shake, and some loose stones have fallen
From yonder terrace.
[ULRIC *leaps down from the terrace.*
Ulric! ever welcome!
Thrice welcome now! this filial—
Ulr. Stop! Before
We approach, tell me—
Wer. Why look you so?
Ulr. Do I
Behold my father, or—
Wer. What?
Ulr. An assassin?
Wer. Insane or insolent!
Ulr. Reply, sir, as
You prize your life, or mine!
Wer. To what must I
Answer?
Ulr. Are you or are you not the assassin
Of Stralenheim?
Wer. I never was as yet
The murderer of any man. What mean you?
Ulr. Did not you *this* night (as the night before)
Retrace the secret passage? Did you not
Again revisit Stralenheim's chamber? and—
[ULRIC *pauses.*
Wer. Proceed.
Ulr. *Died* he not by your hand?
Wer. Great God!
Ulr. You are innocent, then! my father 's innocent!
Embrace me! Yes,—your tone—your look—yes, yes,—
Yet *say* so.
Wer. If I e'er, in heart or mind,
Conceived deliberately such a thought,
But rather strove to trample back to hell
Such thoughts—if e'er they glared a moment through
The irritation of my oppressèd spirit—
May heaven be shut forever from my hopes
As from mine eyes!
Ulr. But Stralenheim is dead.
Wer. 'T is horrible! 't is hideous, as 't is hateful!
But what have I to do with this?
Ulr. No bolt
Is forced; no violence can be detected,
Save on his body. Part of his own household
Have been alarm'd; but as the intendant is
Absent, I took upon myself the care
Of mustering the police. His chamber has,
Past doubt, been enter'd secretly. Excuse me,
If nature—
Wer. Oh, my boy! what unknown woes
Of dark fatality, like clouds, are gathering
Above our house!
Ulr. My father! I acquit you!
But will the world do so? will even the judge,
If— But you must away this instant.
Wer. No!
I 'll face it. Who shall dare suspect me?
Ulr. Yet
You had *no* guests—*no* visitors—no life
Breathing around you, save my mother's?
Wer. Ah!
The Hungarian!
Ulr. He is gone! he disappear'd
Ere sunset.
Wer. No; I hid him in that very
Conceal'd and fatal gallery.
Ulr. *There* I 'll find him.
[ULRIC *is going.*
Wer. It is too late: he had left the palace ere
I quitted it. I found the secret panel
Open, and the doors which lead from that hall
Which masks it: I but thought he had snatch'd the silent
And favourable moment to escape
The myrmidons of Idenstein, who were
Dogging him yester-even.
Ulr. You reclosed
The panel?
Wer. Yes; and not without reproach
(And inner trembling for the avoided peril)
At his dull heedlessness, in leaving thus
His shelterer's asylum to the risk
Of a discovery.
Ulr. You are sure you closed it?
Wer. Certain.

Ulr. That 's well; but had been better, if
You ne'er had turn'd it to a den for —
[*He pauses.*
Wer. Thieves!
Thou wouldst say: I must bear it and deserve it;
But not —
Ulr. No, father; do not speak of this:
This is no hour to think of petty crimes,
But to prevent the consequence of great ones.
Why would you shelter this man?
Wer. Could I shun it?
A man pursued by my chief foe; disgraced
For my own crime; a victim to *my* safety,
Imploring a few hours' concealment from
The very wretch who was the cause he needed
Such refuge. Had he been a wolf I could not
Have in such circumstances thrust him forth.
Ulr. And like the wolf he hath repaid you. But
It is too late to ponder thus: — you must
Set out ere dawn. I will remain here to
Trace the murderer, if 't is possible.
Wer. But this my sudden flight will give the Moloch
Suspicion two new victims in the lieu
Of one, if I remain. The fled Hungarian,
Who seems the culprit, and —
Ulr. Who *seems*? *Who* else
Can be so?
Wer. Not *I*, though just now you doubted —
You, my *son*! — doubted —
Ulr. And do you doubt of him,
The fugitive?
Wer. Boy! since I fell into
The abyss of crime (though not of *such* crime), I,
Having seen the innocent oppress'd for me,
May doubt even of the guilty's guilt. Your heart
Is free, and quick with virtuous wrath to accuse
Appearances; and views a criminal
In Innocence's shadow, it may be,
Because 't is dusky.
Ulr. And if I do so,
What will mankind, who know you not, or knew
But to oppress? You must not stand the hazard.
Away! — I 'll make all easy. Idenstein
Will for his own sake and his jewel's hold
His peace — he also is a partner in
Your flight — moreover —
Wer. Fly! and leave my name
Link'd with the Hungarian's, or preferr'd as poorest,
To bear the brand of bloodshed?
Ulr. Pshaw! leave any thing
Except our fathers' sovereignty and castles,
For which you have so long panted and in vain!
What *name*? You have *no name*, since that you bear
Is feign'd.
Wer. Most true; but still I would not have it
Engraved in crimson in men's memories,
Though in this most obscure abode of men—
Besides, the search —
Ulr. I will provide against
Aught that can touch you. No one knows you here
As heir of Siegendorf: if Idenstein
Suspects, 't is *but suspicion*, and he is
A fool: his folly shall have such employment,
Too, that the unknown Werner shall give way
To nearer thoughts of self. The laws (if e'er
Laws reach'd this village) are all in abeyance
With the late general war of thirty years,
Or crush'd, or rising slowly from the dust
To which the march of armies trampled them.
Stralenheim, although noble, is unheeded
Here, save as *such* — without lands, influence,
Save what hath perish'd with him. Few prolong
A week beyond their funeral rites their sway
O'er men, unless by relatives whose interest
Is roused: such is not here the case; he died
Alone, unknown, — a solitary grave,
Obscure as his deserts, without a scutcheon,
Is all he 'll have, or wants. If *I* discover
The assassin, 't will be well — if not, believe me,
None else, though all the full-fed train of menials
May howl above his ashes (as they did
Around him in his danger on the Oder),

Will no more stir a finger *now* than *then*.
Hence ! hence ! I must not hear your answer — Look !
The stars are almost faded, and the grey
Begins to grizzle the black hair of night.
You shall not answer — Pardon me that I
Am peremptory; 't is your son that speaks,
Your long-lost, late-found son. — Let 's call my mother !
Softly and swiftly step, and leave the rest
To me: I 'll answer for the event as far
As regards *you*, and that is the chief point,
As my first duty which shall be observed.
We 'll meet in Castle Siegendorf — once more
Our banners shall be glorious ! Think of that
Alone, and leave all other thoughts to me,
Whose youth may better battle with them. — Hence !
And may your age be happy ! — I will kiss
My mother once more, then Heaven's speed be with you !
Wer. This counsel 's safe — but is it honourable ?
Ulr. To save a father is a child's chief honour. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV

SCENE I

A Gothic Hall in the Castle of Siegendorf, near Prague.

Enter ERIC *and* HENRICK, *Retainers of the Count.*

Eric. So better times are come at last; to these
Old walls new masters and high wassail, both
A long desideratum.
Hen. Yes, for *masters*,
It might be unto those who long for novelty,
Though made by a new grave: but as for wassail,
Methinks the old Count Siegendorf maintain'd
His feudal hospitality as high
As e'er another prince of the empire.
Eric. Why,
For the mere cup and trencher, we no doubt
Fared passing well; but as for merriment
And sport, without which salt and sauces season
The cheer but scantily, our sizings were
Even of the narrowest.
Hen. The old count loved not
The roar of revel; are you sure that *this* does?
Eric. As yet he hath been courteous as he 's bounteous,
And we all love him.
Hen. His reign is as yet
Hardly a year o'erpast its honeymoon,
And the first year of sovereigns is bridal:
Anon, we shall perceive his real sway
And moods of mind.
Eric. Pray Heaven he keep the present !
Then his brave son, Count Ulric — there 's a knight !
Pity the wars are o'er !
Hen. Why so ?
Eric. Look on him !
And answer that yourself.
Hen. He 's very youthful,
And strong and beautiful as a young tiger.
Eric. That 's not a faithful vassal's likeness.
Hen. But
Perhaps a true one.
Eric. Pity, as I said,
The wars are over: in the hall, who like
Count Ulric for a well-supported pride,
Which awes, but yet offends not ? in the field,
Who like him with his spear in hand, when, gnashing
His tusks and ripping up from right to left
The howling hounds, the boar makes for the thicket ?
Who backs a horse, or bears a hawk, or wears
A sword like him ? Whose plume nods knightlier ?
Hen. No one's, I grant you. Do not fear, if war
Be long in coming, he is of that kind
Will make it for himself, if he hath not
Already done as much.
Eric. What do you mean ?
Hen. You can't deny his train of followers
(But few our native fellow vassals born
On the domain) are such a sort of knaves
As — (*Pauses.*)
Eric. What ?
Hen. The war (you love so much) leaves living.
Like other parents, she spoils her worst children.

Eric. Nonsense! they are all brave iron-visaged fellows,
Such as old Tilly loved.
Hen. And who loved Tilly?
Ask that at Magdebourg — or for that matter
Wallenstein either; — they are gone to —
Eric. Rest;
But what beyond 't is not ours to pronounce.
Hen. I wish they had left us something of their rest:
The country (nominally now at peace)
Is over-run with — God knows who: they fly
By night, and disappear with sunrise; but
Leave us no less desolation, nay, even more,
Than the most *open* warfare.
Eric. But Count Ulric —
What has all this to do with him?
Hen. With *him!*
He — might prevent it. As you say he 's fond
Of war, why makes he it not on those marauders?
Eric. You 'd better ask himself.
Hen. I would as soon
Ask the lion why he laps not milk.
Eric. And here he comes!
Hen. The devil! you 'll hold your tongue?
Eric. Why do you turn so pale?
Hen. 'T is nothing — but
Be silent.
Eric. I will, upon what you have said.
Hen. I assure you I meant nothing, — a mere sport
Of words, no more; besides, had it been otherwise,
He is to espouse the gentle Baroness,
Ida of Stralenheim, the late baron's heiress:
And she, no doubt, will soften whatsoever
Of fierceness the late long intestine wars
Have given all natures, and most unto those
Who were born in them, and bred up upon
The knees of Homicide; sprinkled, as it were,
With blood even at their baptism. Prithee, peace
On all that I have said!

Enter ULRIC *and* RODOLPH.

Good morrow, count.
Ulr. Good morrow, worthy Henrick. Eric, is
All ready for the chase?
Eric. The dogs are order'd
Down to the forest, and the vassals out
To beat the bushes, and the day looks promising.
Shall I call forth your excellency's suite?
What courser will you please to mount?
Ulr. The dun,
Walstein.
Eric. I fear he scarcely has recover'd
The toils of Monday: 't was a noble chase:
You spear'd *four* with your own hand.
Ulr. True, good Eric;
I had forgotten — let it be the grey, then,
Old Ziska: he has not been out this fortnight.
Eric. He shall be straight caparison'd. How many
Of your immediate retainers shall
Escort you?
Ulr. I leave that to Weilburg, our
Master of the horse. [*Exit* ERIC.
Rodolph!
Rod. My lord!
Ulr. The news
Is awkward from the — (RODOLPH *points to* HENRICK.)
How now, Henrick? why
Loiter you here?
Hen. For your commands, my lord.
Ulr. Go to my father, and present my duty,
And learn if he would aught with me before
I mount. [*Exit* HENRICK.
Rodolph, our friends have had a check
Upon the frontiers of Franconia, and
'T is rumour'd that the column sent against them
Is to be strengthen'd. I must join them soon.
Rod. Best wait for further and more sure advices.
Ulr. I mean it — and indeed it could not well
Have fallen out at a time more opposite
To all my plans.
Rod. It will be difficult
To excuse your absence to the count your father.
Ulr. Yes, but the unsettled state of our domain
In high Silesia will permit and cover
My journey. In the mean time, when we are
Engaged in the chase, draw off the eighty men

Whom Wolffe leads — keep the forests on your route:
You know it well?
Rod. As well as on that night
When we —
Ulr. We will not speak of that until
We can repeat the same with like success:
And when you have join'd, give Rosenberg this letter. [*Gives a letter.*
Add further, that I have sent this slight addition
To our force with you and Wolffe, as herald of
My coming, though I could but spare them ill
At this time, as my father loves to keep
Full numbers of retainers round the castle,
Until this marriage and its feasts and fooleries
Are rung out with its peal of nuptial nonsense.
Rod. I thought you loved the lady Ida?
Ulr. Why,
I do so — but it follows not from that
I would bind in my youth and glorious years,
So brief and burning, with a lady's zone,
Although 't were that of Venus; — but I love her,
As woman should be loved, fairly and solely.
Rod. And constantly?
Ulr. I think so; for I love
Nought else. — But I have not the time to pause
Upon these gewgaws of the heart. Great things
We have to do ere long. Speed! speed! good Rodolph!
Rod. On my return, however, I shall find
The Baroness Ida lost in Countess Siegendorf?
Ulr. Perhaps; my father wishes it, and sooth
'T is no bad policy: this union with
The last bud of the rival branch at once
Unites the future and destroys the past.
Rod. Adieu.
Ulr. Yet hold — we had better keep together
Until the chase begins; then draw thou off,
And do as I have said.
Rod. I will. But to
Return — 't was a most kind act in the count
Your father to send up to Königsberg
For this fair orphan of the baron, and
To hail her as his daughter.
Ulr. Wondrous kind!
Especially as little kindness till
Then grew between them.
Rod. The late baron died
Of a fever, did he not?
Ulr. How should I know?
Rod. I have heard it whisper'd there was something strange
About his death — and even the place of it
Is scarcely known.
Ulr. Some obscure village on
The Saxon or Silesian frontier.
Rod. He
Has left no testament — no farewell words?
Ulr. I am neither confessor nor notary,
So cannot say.
Rod. Ah! here 's the lady Ida.

Enter IDA STRALENHEIM.

Ulr. You are early, my sweet cousin!
Ida. Not *too* early,
Dear Ulric, if I do not interrupt you.
Why do you call me '*cousin*'?
Ulr. (*smiling*). Are we not so?
Ida. Yes, but I do not like the name; methinks
It sounds so cold, as if you thought upon
Our pedigree, and only weigh'd our blood.
Ulr. (*starting*). Blood!
Ida. Why does yours start from your cheeks?
Ulr. Ay! doth it?
Ida. It doth — but no! it rushes like a torrent
Even to your brow again.
Ulr. (*recovering himself*). And if it fled,
It only was because your presence sent it
Back to my heart, which beats for you, sweet cousin!
Ida. 'Cousin' again.
Ulr. Nay, then I 'll call you sister.
Ida. I like that name still worse. — Would we had ne'er
Been aught of kindred!
Ulr. (*gloomily*). Would we never had!
Ida. Oh heavens! and can *you wish that?*
Ulr. Dearest Ida!
Did I not echo your own wish?
Ida. Yes, Ulric,
But then I wish'd it not with such a glance,
And scarce knew what I said; but let me be

Sister, or cousin, what you will, so that
I still to you am something.
Ulr. You shall be
All — all —
Ida. And you to *me are* so already;
But I can wait!
Ulr. Dear Ida!
Ida. Call me Ida,
Your Ida, for I would be yours, none else's —
Indeed I have none else left, since my poor father — [*She pauses.*
Ulr. You have *mine* — you have *me.*
Ida. Dear Ulric, how I wish
My father could but view my happiness,
Which wants but this!
Ulr. Indeed!
Ida. You would have loved him,
He you; for the brave ever love each other.
His manner was a little cold, his spirit
Proud (as is birth's prerogative); but under
This grave exterior — Would you had known each other!
Had such as you been near him on his journey,
He had not died without a friend to soothe
His last and lonely moments.
Ulr. Who says *that?*
Ida. What?
Ulr. That he *died alone.*
Ida. The general rumour
And disappearance of his servants, who
Have ne'er return'd: that fever was most deadly
Which swept them all away.
Ulr. If they were near him,
He could not die neglected or alone.
Ida. Alas! what is a menial to a death-bed,
When the dim eye rolls vainly round for what
It loves? — They say he died of a fever.
Ulr. *Say!*
It *was* so.
Ida. I sometimes dream otherwise.
Ulr. All dreams are false.
Ida. And yet I see him as
I see you.
Ulr. *Where?*
Ida. In sleep — I see him lie
Pale, bleeding, and a man with a raised knife
Beside him.
Ulr. But you do not see his *face?*
Ida (*looking at him*). No! Oh, my God! do *you?*
Ulr. Why do you ask?
Ida. Because you look as if you saw a murderer!
Ulr. (*agitatedly*). Ida, this is mere childishness; your weakness
Infects me, to my shame: but as all feelings
Of yours are common to me, it affects me.
Prithee, sweet child, change —
Ida. Child, indeed! I have
Full fifteen summers. [*A bugle sounds.*
Rod. Hark, my lord, the bugle!
Ida (*peevishly to* RODOLPH). Why need you tell him that? Can he not hear it
Without your echo?
Rod. Pardon me, fair baroness!
Ida. I will not pardon you, unless you earn it
By aiding me in my dissuasion of
Count Ulric from the chase to-day.
Rod. You will not,
Lady, need aid of mine.
Ulr. I must not now
Forego it.
Ida. But you shall!
Ulr. *Shall!*
Ida. Yes, or be
No true knight. — Come, dear Ulric! yield to me
In this, for this one day: the day looks heavy,
And you are turn'd so pale and ill.
Ulr. You jest.
Ida. Indeed I do not: — ask of Rodolph.
Rod. Truly,
My lord, within this quarter of an hour
You have changed more than e'er I saw you change
In years.
Ulr. 'T is nothing; but if 't were, the air
Would soon restore me. I 'm the true chameleon,
And live but on the atmosphere; your feasts
In castle halls, and social banquets, nurse not
My spirit; I 'm a forester and breather
Of the steep mountain-tops, where I love all
The eagle loves.
Ida. Except his prey, I hope.
Ulr. Sweet Ida, wish me a fair chase, and I
Will bring you six boars' heads for trophies home.

Ida. And will you not stay, then? You shall not go!
Come! I will sing to you.
Ulr. Ida, you scarcely
Will make a soldier's wife.
Ida. I do not wish
To be so; for I trust these wars are over,
And you will live in peace on your domains.

Enter WERNER *as* COUNT SIEGENDORF.

Ulr. My father, I salute you, and it grieves me
With such brief greeting. You have heard our bugle;
The vassals wait.
Sieg. So let them. — You forget
To-morrow is the appointed festival
In Prague for peace restored. You are apt to follow
The chase with such an ardour as will scarce
Permit you to return to-day, or if
Return'd, too much fatigued to join to-morrow
The nobles in our marshall'd ranks.
Ulr. You, count,
Will well supply the place of both — I am not
A lover of these pageantries.
Sieg. No, Ulric:
It were not well that you alone of all
Our young nobility —
Ida. And far the noblest
In aspect and demeanour.
Sieg. (*to* IDA). True, dear child,
Though somewhat frankly said for a fair damsel. —
But, Ulric, recollect too our position,
So lately reinstated in our honours.
Believe me, 't would be mark'd in any house,
But most in *ours*, that ONE should be found wanting
At such a time and place. Besides, the Heaven
Which gave us back our own, in the same moment
It spread its peace o'er all, hath double claims
On us for thanksgiving: first, for our country;
And next, that we are here to share its blessings.
Ulr. (*aside*). Devout, too! Well, sir, I obey at once. (*Then aloud to a Servant.*)
Ludwig, dismiss the train without!
[*Exit* LUDWIG.

Ida. And so
You yield at once to him what I for hours
Might supplicate in vain.
Sieg. (*smiling*). You are not jealous
Of me, I trust, my pretty rebel, who
Would sanction disobedience against all
Except thyself? But fear not; thou shalt rule him
Hereafter with a fonder sway and firmer.
Ida. But I should like to govern *now*.
Sieg. You shall;
Your *harp*, which by the way awaits you with
The countess in her chamber. — She complains
That you are a sad truant to your music:
She attends you.
Ida. Then good morrow, my kind kinsmen!
Ulric, you 'll come and hear me?
Ulr. By and by.
Ida. Be sure I 'll sound it better than your bugles;
Then pray you be as punctual to its notes:
I 'll play you King Gustavus' march.
Ulr. And why not
Old Tilly's?
Ida. Not that monster's! I should think
My harp-strings rang with groans, and not with music,
Could aught of *his* sound on it: — but come quickly;
Your mother will be eager to receive you.
[*Exit* IDA.
Sieg. Ulric, I wish to speak with you alone.
Ulr. My time 's your vassal. —
(*Aside to* RODOLPH.) Rodolph, hence! and do
As I directed: and by his best speed
And readiest means let Rosenberg reply.
Rod. Count Siegendorf, command you aught? I am bound
Upon a journey past the frontier.
Sieg. (*starts*). Ah! —
Where? on *what* frontier?
Rod. The Silesian, on
My way — (*Aside to* ULRIC.) *Where* shall I say?
Ulr. (*aside to* RODOLPH). To Hamburgh.
(*Aside to himself.*) That
Word will, I think, put a firm padlock on
His further inquisition.
Rod. Count, to Hamburgh

Sieg. (*agitated*). Hamburgh! No, I have nought to do there, nor
Am aught connected with that city. Then
God speed you!
Rod. Fare ye well, Count Siegendorf!
[*Exit* Rodolph.
Sieg. Ulric, this man, who has just departed, is
One of those strange companions whom I fain
Would reason with you on.
Ulr. My lord, he is
Noble by birth, of one of the first houses
In Saxony.
Sieg. I talk not of his birth,
But of his bearing. Men speak lightly of him.
Ulr. So they will do of most men. Even the monarch
Is not fenced from his chamberlain's slander, or
The sneer of the last courtier whom he has made
Great and ungrateful.
Sieg. If I must be plain,
The world speaks more than lightly of this Rodolph:
They say he is leagued with the 'black bands' who still
Ravage the frontier.
Ulr. And will you believe
The world?
Sieg. In this case — yes.
Ulr. In *any* case,
I thought you knew it better than to take
An accusation for a sentence.
Sieg. Son!
I understand you; you refer to — but
My Destiny has so involved about me
Her spider web, that I can only flutter
Like the poor fly, but break it not. Take heed,
Ulric; you have seen to what the passions led me:
Twenty long years of misery and famine
Quench'd them not — twenty thousand more perchance,
Hereafter (or even here in *moments* which
Might date for years, did Anguish make the dial),
May not obliterate or expiate
The madness and dishonour of an instant.
Ulric, be warn'd by a father! — I was not
By mine, and you behold me!
Ulr. I behold
The prosperous and belovèd Siegendorf,
Lord of a prince's appanage, and honour'd
By those he rules and those he ranks with.
Sieg. Ah!
Why wilt thou call me prosperous, while I fear
For thee? Belovèd, when thou lovest me not!
All hearts but one may beat in kindness for me —
But if my son is cold! —
Ulr. Who *dare* say that?
Sieg. None else but I, who see it — *feel* it — keener
Than would your adversary, who dared say so,
Your sabre in his heart! But mine survives
The wound.
Ulr. You err. My nature is not given
To outward fondling: how should it be so
After twelve years' divorcement from my parents?
Sieg. And did not *I* too pass those twelve torn years
In a like absence? But 't is vain to urge you —
Nature was never call'd back by remonstrance.
Let 's change the theme. I wish you to consider
That these young violent nobles of high name,
But dark deeds (ay, the darkest, if all Rumour
Reports be true), with whom thou consortest,
Will lead thee —
Ulr. (*impatiently*). I'll be *led* by no man.
Sieg. Nor
Be leader of such, I would hope. At once
To wean thee from the perils of thy youth
And haughty spirit, I have thought it well
That thou shouldst wed the lady Ida — more
As thou appear'st to love her.
Ulr. I have said
I will obey your orders, were they to
Unite with Hecate; can a son say more?
Sieg. He says too much in saying this. It is not
The nature of thine age, nor of thy blood,
Nor of thy temperament, to talk so coolly,
Or act so carelessly, in that which is
The bloom or blight of all men's happiness

(For Glory's pillow is but restless if
Love lay not down his cheek there): some strong bias,
Some master fiend is in thy service to
Misrule the mortal who believes him slave,
And makes his every thought subservient; else
Thou 'dst say at once — 'I love young Ida, and
Will wed her:' or, 'I love her not, and all
The powers of earth shall never make me.' — So
Would I have answer'd.
Ulr. Sir, *you wed* for love.
Sieg. I did, and it has been my only refuge
In many miseries.
Ulr. Which miseries
Had never been but for this love-match.
Sieg. Still
Against your age and nature! Who at twenty
E'er answer'd thus till now?
Ulr. Did you not warn me
Against your own example?
Sieg. Boyish sophist!
In a word, do you love, or love not, Ida?
Ulr. What matters it, if I am ready to
Obey you in espousing her?
Sieg. As far
As you feel, nothing, but all life for her.
She 's young — all beautiful — adores you — is
Endow'd with qualities to give happiness,
Such as rounds common life into a dream
Of something which your poets cannot paint,
And (if it were not wisdom to love virtue)
For which Philosophy might barter Wisdom;
And giving so much happiness, deserve
A little in return. I would not have her
Break her heart for a man who has none to break;
Or wither on her stalk like some pale rose
Deserted by the bird she thought a nightingale,
According to the Orient tale. She is —
Ulr. The daughter of dead Stralenheim, your foe:
I 'll wed her, ne'ertheless: though, to say truth,
Just now I am not violently transported
In favour of such unions.
Sieg. But she loves you.
Ulr. And I love her, and therefore would think *twice*.
Sieg. Alas! Love never *did* so.
Ulr. Then 't is time
He should begin, and take the bandage from
His eyes, and look before he leaps: till now
He hath ta'en a jump i' the dark.
Sieg. But you consent?
Ulr. I did, and do.
Sieg. Then fix the day.
Ulr. 'T is usual,
And certes courteous, to leave that to the lady.
Sieg. *I* will engage for *her*.
Ulr. So will not *I*
For any woman; and as what I fix,
I fain would see unshaken, when she gives
Her answer, I 'll give mine.
Sieg. But 't is your office
To woo.
Ulr. Count, 't is a marriage of your making,
So be it of your wooing; but to please you
I will now pay my duty to my mother,
With whom, you know, the lady Ida is.
What would you have? You have forbid my stirring
For manly sports beyond the castle walls,
And I obey; you bid me turn a chamberer,
To pick up gloves, and fans, and knitting-needles,
And list to songs and tunes, and watch for smiles,
And smile at pretty prattle, and look into
The eyes of feminine, as though they were
The stars receding early to our wish
Upon the dawn of a world-winning battle —
What can a son or man do more?
[*Exit* Ulric.
Sieg. (*solus*). Too much!
Too much of duty, and too little love!
He pays me in the coin he owes me not:
For such hath been my wayward fate, I could not
Fulfil a parent's duties by his side
Till now; but love he owes me, for my thoughts
Ne'er left him, nor my eyes long'd without tears
To see my child again, and now I have found him!
But how! — obedient, but with coldness; duteous
In my sight, but with carelessness; mysterious.

Abstracted, distant, much given to long absence,
And where — none know — in league with the most riotous
Of our young nobles; though, to do him justice,
He never stoops down to their vulgar pleasures;
Yet there 's some tie between them which I cannot
Unravel. They look up to him, consult him,
Throng round him as a leader: but with me
He hath no confidence! Ah! can I hope it
After — what! doth my father's curse descend
Even to my child? Or is the Hungarian near
To shed more blood? or — Oh! if it should be!
Spirit of Stralenheim, dost thou walk these walls
To wither him and his, who, though they slew not,
Unlatch'd the door of death for thee? 'T was not
Our fault, nor is our sin: thou wert our foe,
And yet I spared thee when my own destruction
Slept with thee, to awake with thine awakening!
And only took — Accursèd gold! thou liest
Like poison in my hands; I dare not use thee,
Nor part from thee; thou camest in such a guise,
Methinks thou wouldst contaminate all hands
Like mine. Yet I have done, to atone for thee,
Thou villainous gold, and thy dead master's doom,
Though he died not by me or mine, as much
As if he were my brother! I have ta'en
His orphan Ida — cherish'd her as one
Who will be mine.

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Atten. The abbot, if it please
Your excellency, whom you sent for, waits
Upon you. [*Exit* ATTENDANT.

Enter the PRIOR ALBERT.

Prior. Peace be with these walls, and all
Within them!

Sieg. Welcome, welcome, holy father!
And may thy prayer be heard! All men have need
Of such, and I —

Prior. Have the first claim to all
The prayers of our community. Our convent,
Erected by your ancestors, is still
Protected by their children.

Sieg. Yes, good father;
Continue daily orisons for us
In these dim days of heresies and blood,
Though the schismatic Swede, Gustavus, is
Gone home.

Prior. To the endless home of unbelievers,
Where there is everlasting wail and woe,
Gnashing of teeth, and tears of blood, and fire
Eternal, and the worm which dieth not!

Sieg. True, father: and to avert those pangs from one,
Who, though of our most faultless holy church,
Yet died without its last and dearest offices
Which smooth the soul through purgatorial pains,
I have to offer humbly this donation
In masses for his spirit.

[SIEGENDORF *offers the gold which he had taken from* STRALENHEIM.

Prior. Count, if I
Receive it, 't is because I know too well
Refusal would offend you. Be assured
The largess shall be only dealt in alms,
And every mass no less sung for the dead.
Our house needs no donations, thanks to yours,
Which has of old endow'd it; but from you
And yours in all meet things 't is fit we obey.
For whom shall mass be said?

Sieg. (*faltering*). For — for — the dead.

Prior. His name?

Sieg. 'T is from a soul, and not a name,
I would avert perdition.

Prior. I meant not
To pry into your secret. We will pray
For one unknown, the same as for the proudest.

Sieg. Secret! I have none: but, father, he who 's gone
Might *have* one; or, in short, he did bequeath —
No, not bequeath — but I bestow this sum
For pious purposes.

Prior. A proper deed
In the behalf of our departed friends.
Sieg. But he who 's gone was not my friend, but foe,
The deadliest and the stanchest.
Prior. Better still!
To employ our means to obtain heaven for the souls
Of our dead enemies is worthy those
Who can forgive them living.
Sieg. But I did not
Forgive this man. I loathed him to the last,
As he did me. I do not love him now,
But —
Prior. Best of all! for this is pure religion!
You fain would rescue him you hate from hell —
An evangelical compassion — with
Your own gold too!
Sieg. Father, 't is not my gold.
Prior. Whose then? You said it was no legacy.
Sieg. No matter whose — of this be sure, that he
Who own'd it never more will need it, save
In that which it may purchase from your altars:
'T is yours, or theirs.
Prior. Is there no blood upon it?
Sieg. No; but there 's worse than blood — eternal shame!
Prior. Did he who own'd it die in his *bed?*
Sieg. Alas!
He did.
Prior. Son! you relapse into revenge,
If you regret your enemy's bloodless death.
Sieg. His death was fathomlessly deep in blood.
Prior. You said he died in his bed, not battle.
Sieg. He
Died, I scarce know — but — he was stabb'd i' the dark,
And now you have it — perish'd on his pillow
By a cut-throat! Ay! — you may look upon me!
I am *not* the man. I 'll meet your eye on that point,
As I can one day God's.
Prior. Nor did he die
By means, or men, or instrument of yours?
Sieg. No! by the God who sees and strikes!
Prior. Nor know you
Who slew him?
Sieg. I could only guess at *one*,
And he to me a stranger, unconnected,
As unemploy'd. Except by one day's knowledge,
I never saw the man who was suspected.
Prior. Then you are free from guilt.
Sieg. (*eagerly*). Oh, *am* I? — say!
Prior. You have said so, and know best.
Sieg. Father! I have spoken
The truth, and nought but truth, if *not* the *whole:*
Yet say I am *not* guilty! for the blood
Of this man weighs on me, as if I shed it,
Though, by the Power who abhorreth human blood,
I did not! — nay, once spared it, when I might
And *could* — ay, perhaps, *should* (if our self-safety
Be e'er excusable in such defences
Against the attacks of over-potent foes).
But pray for him, for me, and all my house;
For, as I said, though I be innocent,
I know not why, a like remorse is on me,
As if he had fallen by me or mine. Pray for me,
Father! I have pray'd myself in vain.
Prior. I will.
Be comforted! You are innocent, and should
Be calm as innocence.
Sieg. But calmness is not
Always the attribute of innocence.
I feel it is not.
Prior. But it will be so,
When the mind gathers up its truth within it.
Remember the great festival to-morrow,
In which you rank amidst our chiefest nobles,
As well as your brave son; and smooth your aspect;
Nor in the general orison of thanks
For bloodshed stopt, let blood you shed not rise
A cloud upon your thoughts. This were to be
Too sensitive. Take comfort, and forget
Such things, and leave remorse unto the guilty. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V

SCENE I

A large and magnificent Gothic Hall in the Castle of Siegendorf, decorated with Trophies, Banners, and Arms of that Family.

Enter ARNHEIM *and* MEISTER, *attendants of* COUNT SIEGENDORF.

Arn. Be quick! the count will soon return: the ladies
Already are at the portal. Have you sent
The messengers in search of him he seeks for?
Meis. I have, in all directions, over Prague,
As far as the man's dress and figure could
By your description track him. The devil take
These revels and processions! All the pleasure
(If such there be) must fall to the spectators.
I 'm sure none doth to us who make the show.
Arn. Go to! my lady countess comes.
Meis. I 'd rather
Ride a day's hunting on an outworn jade,
Than follow in the train of a great man
In these dull pageantries.
Arn. Begone! and rail
Within. [*Exeunt.*

Enter the COUNTESS JOSEPHINE SIEGENDORF *and* IDA STRALENHEIM.

Jos. Well, Heaven be praised, the show is over!
Ida. How can you say so! never have I dreamt
Of aught so beautiful. The flowers, the boughs,
The banners, and the nobles, and the knights,
The gems, the robes, the plumes, the happy faces,
The coursers, and the incense, and the sun
Streaming through the stain'd windows, even the *tombs*
Which look'd so calm, and the celestial hymns,
Which seem'd as if they rather came from heaven
Than mounted there, the bursting organ's peal
Rolling on high like an harmonious thunder,
The white robes and the lifted eyes, the world
At peace! and all at peace with one another!
Oh, my sweet mother! [*Embracing* JOSEPHINE.
Jos. My belovèd child!
For such, I trust, thou shalt be shortly.
Ida. Oh!
I am so already. Feel how my heart beats!
Jos. It does, my love; and never may it throb
With aught more bitter.
Ida. Never shall it do so!
How should it? What should make us grieve? I hate
To hear of sorrow: how can we be sad,
Who love each other so entirely? You,
The count, and Ulric, and your daughter Ida.
Jos. Poor child!
Ida. Do you pity me?
Jos. No; I but envy,
And that in sorrow, not in the world's sense
Of the universal vice, if one vice be
More general than another.
Ida. I 'll not hear
A word against a world which still contains
You and my Ulric. Did you ever see
Aught like him? How he tower'd amongst them all!
How all eyes follow'd him! The flowers fell faster —
Rain'd from each lattice at his feet, methought —
Than before all the rest; and where he trod
I dare be sworn that they grow still, nor e'er
Will wither.
Jos. You will spoil him, little flatterer,
If he should hear you.
Ida. But he never will.
I dare not say so much to him — I fear him.
Jos. Why so? he loves you well.
Ida. But I can never
Shape my thoughts *of* him into words *to* him.
Besides, he sometimes frightens me.
Jos. How so?
Ida. A cloud comes o'er his blue eyes suddenly,
Yet he says nothing.
Jos. It is nothing: all men,
Especially in these dark troublous times,
Have much to think of.
Ida. But I cannot think
Of aught save him.

Jos. Yet there are other men,
In the world's eye, as goodly. There 's, for instance,
The young Count Waldorf, who scarce once withdrew
His eyes from yours to-day.
Ida. I did not see him,
But Ulric. Did you not see at the moment
When all knelt, and I wept? and yet methought,
Through my fast tears, though they were thick and warm,
I saw him smiling on me.
Jos. I could not
See aught save heaven, to which my eyes were raised
Together with the people's.
Ida. I thought too
Of heaven, although I look'd on Ulric.
Jos. Come,
Let us retire; they will be here anon
Expectant of the banquet. We will lay
Aside these nodding plumes and dragging trains.
Ida. And, above all, these stiff and heavy jewels
Which make my head and heart ache, as both throb
Beneath their glitter o'er my brow and zone.
Dear mother, I am with you.

Enter COUNT SIEGENDORF, *in full dress, from the solemnity, and* LUDWIG.

Sieg. Is he not found?
Lud. Strict search is making everywhere; and if
The man be in Prague, be sure he will be found.
Sieg. Where 's Ulric?
Lud. He rode round the other way
With some young nobles; but he left them soon;
And, if I err not, not a minute since
I heard his excellency, with his train,
Gallop o'er the west drawbridge.

Enter ULRIC, *splendidly dressed.*

Sieg. (*to* LUDWIG). See they cease not
Their quest of him I have described.
[*Exit* LUDWIG.
Oh, Ulric!
How have I long'd for thee!
Ulr. Your wish is granted —
Behold me!
Sieg. I have seen the murderer.
Ulr. Whom? Where?
Sieg. The Hungarian, who slew Stralenheim.
Ulr. You dream.
Sieg. I live! and as I live, I saw him —
Heard him! he dared to utter even my name.
Ulr. What name?
Sieg. Werner! *'t was* mine.
Ulr. It must be so
No more: forget it.
Sieg. Never! never! all
My destinies were woven in that name:
It will not be engraved upon my tomb,
But it may lead me there.
Ulr. To the point — the Hungarian?
Sieg. Listen! — The church was throng'd; the hymn was raised;
'*Te Deum*' peal'd from nations, rather than
From choirs, in one great cry of 'God be praised'
For one day's peace, after thrice ten dread years,
Each bloodier than the former. I arose,
With all the nobles, and as I look'd down
Along the lines of lifted faces, from
Our banner'd and escutcheon'd gallery, I
Saw, like a flash of lightning (for I saw
A moment and no more), what struck me sightless
To all else — the Hungarian's face! I grew
Sick; and when I recover'd from the mist
Which curl'd about my senses, and again
Look'd down, I saw him not. The thanksgiving
Was over, and we march'd back in procession.
Ulr. Continue.
Sieg. When we reach'd the Muldau's bridge,
The joyous crowd above, the numberless
Barks mann'd with revellers in their best garbs,
Which shot along the glancing tide below,
The decorated street, the long array,
The clashing music, and the thundering
Of far artillery which seem'd to bid
A long and loud farewell to its great doings,
The standards o'er me, and the tramplings round,
The roar of rushing thousands, — all — all could not
Chase this man from my mind, although my senses
No longer held him palpable.

Ulr. You saw him
No more, then?
Sieg. I look'd, as a dying soldier
Looks at a draught of water, for this man:
But still I saw him not; but in his stead ——
Ulr. What in his stead?
Sieg. My eye for ever fell
Upon your dancing crest; the loftiest,
As on the loftiest and the loveliest head
It rose the highest of the stream of plumes
Which overflow'd the glittering streets of Prague.
Ulr. What 's this to the Hungarian?
Sieg. Much; for I
Had almost then forgot him in my son;
When just as the artillery ceased, and paused
The music, and the crowd embraced in lieu
Of shouting, I heard in a deep, low voice,
Distinct and keener far upon my ear
Than the late cannon's volume, this word — '*Werner!*'
Ulr. Utter'd by ——
Sieg. HIM! I turn'd — and saw — and fell.
Ulr. And wherefore? Were you seen?
Sieg. The officious care
Of those around me dragg'd me from the spot,
Seeing my faintness, ignorant of the cause;
You, too, were too remote in the procession
(The old nobles being divided from their children)
To aid me.
Ulr. But I 'll aid you now.
Sieg. In what?
Ulr. In searching for this man, or — When he 's found
What shall we do with him?
Sieg. I know not that.
Ulr. Then wherefore seek?
Sieg. Because I cannot rest
Till he is found. His fate, and Stralenheim's,
And ours, seem intertwisted! nor can be
Unravell'd till —

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Atten. A stranger to wait on
Your excellency.
Sieg. Who?
Atten. He gave no name.
Sieg. Admit him, ne'ertheless.

[*The* ATTENDANT *introduces* GABOR, *and afterwards exit.*

Ah!
Gab. 'T is, then, Werner!
Sieg. (*haughtily*). The same you knew, sir, by that name; and *you!*
Gab. (*looking round*). I recognize you both: father and son,
It seems. Count, I have heard that you, or yours,
Have lately been in search of me: I am here.
Sieg. I have sought you, and have found you: you are charged
(Your own heart may inform you why) with such
A crime as — [*He pauses.*
Gab. Give it utterance, and then
I 'll meet the consequences.
Sieg. You shall do so —
Unless —
Gab. First, who accuses me?
Sieg. All things,
If not all men: the universal rumour,
My own presence on the spot, the place, the time,
And every speck of circumstance unite
To fix the blot on you.
Gab. And on *me only?*
Pause ere you answer: is no other name,
Save mine, stain'd in this business?
Sieg. Trifling villain
Who play'st with thine own guilt! Of all that breathe
Thou best dost know the innocence of him
'Gainst whom thy breath would blow thy bloody slander.
But I will talk no further with a wretch,
Further than justice asks. Answer at once,
And without quibbling, to my charge.
Gab. 'T is false!
Sieg. Who says so?
Gab. I.
Sieg. And how disprove it?
Gab. By
The presence of the murderer.
Sieg. Name him!
Gab. He
May have more names than one. Your lordship had so
Once on a time.
Sieg. If you mean me, I dare
Your utmost.
Gab. You may do so, and in safety;
I know the assassin.
Sieg. Where is he?
Gab. (*pointing to* ULRIC). Beside you!

[ULRIC *rushes forward to attack* GABOR; SIEGENDORF *interposes.*

Sieg. Liar and fiend! but you shall not be slain;
These walls are mine, and you are safe within them. [*He turns to* Ulric.
Ulric, repel this calumny, as I
Will do. I avow it is a growth so monstrous,
I could not deem it earth-born: but be calm;
It will refute itself. But touch him not.
[Ulric *endeavours to compose himself.*
Gab. Look at *him*, count, and then *hear me.*
Sieg. (*first to* Gabor, *and then looking at* Ulric). I hear thee.
My God! you look —
Ulr. How?
Sieg. As on that dread night
When we met in the garden.
Ulr. (*composes himself*). It is nothing.
Gab. Count, you are bound to hear me. I came hither
Not seeking you, but sought. When I knelt down
Amidst the people in the church, I dream'd not
To find the beggar'd Werner in the seat
Of senators and princes; but you have call'd me,
And we have met.
Sieg. Go on, sir.
Gab. Ere I do so,
Allow me to inquire who profited
By Stralenheim's death? Was 't I — as poor as ever;
And poorer by suspicion on my name!
The baron lost in that last outrage neither
Jewels nor gold; his life alone was sought,
A life which stood between the claims of others
To honours and estates scarce less than princely.
Sieg. These hints, as vague as vain, attach no less
To me than to my son.
Gab. I can't help that.
But let the consequence alight on him
Who feels himself the guilty one amongst us.
I speak to you, Count Siegendorf, because
I know you innocent, and deem you just.
But ere I can proceed — *dare* you protect me?
Dare you command me?

[Siegendorf *first looks at the Hungarian, and then at* Ulric, *who has unbuckled his sabre, and is drawing lines with it on the floor — still in its sheath.*

Ulr. (*looks at his father and says*) Let the man go on!
Gab. I am unarm'd, count; bid your son lay down
His sabre.
Ulr. (*offers it to him contemptuously*). Take it.
Gab. No, sir, 't is enough
That we are both unarm'd; I would not choose
To wear a steel which may be stain'd with more
Blood than came there in battle.
Ulr. (*casts the sabre from him in contempt*). It — or some
Such other weapon in my hands — spared yours
Once when disarm'd and at my mercy.
Gab. True —
I have not forgotten it: you spared me for
Your own especial purpose, to sustain
An ignominy not my own.
Ulr. Proceed.
The tale is doubtless worthy the relater.
But is it of my father to hear further? [*To* Siegendorf.
Sieg. (*takes his son by the hand*). My son, I know my own innocence, and doubt not
Of yours, but I have promised this man patience;
Let him continue.
Gab. I will not detain you
By speaking of myself much: I began
Life early, and am what the world has made me.
At Frankfort on the Oder, where I pass'd
A winter in obscurity, it was
My chance at several places of resort
(Which I frequented sometimes, but not often)
To hear related a strange circumstance
In February last. A martial force,
Sent by the state, had, after strong resistance,
Secured a band of desperate men, supposed
Marauders from the hostile camp. They proved,
However, not to be so, but banditti,
Whom either accident or enterprise
Had carried from their usual haunt — the forests
Which skirt Bohemia — even into Lusatia.
Many amongst them were reported of
High rank; and martial law slept for a time.

At last they were escorted o'er the frontiers,
And placed beneath the civil jurisdiction
Of the free town of Frankfort. Of *their* fate
I know no more.
Sieg. And what is this to Ulric?
Gab. Amongst them there was said to be one man
Of wonderful endowments: birth and fortune,
Youth, strength, and beauty, almost superhuman,
And courage as unrivall'd, were proclaim'd
His by the public rumour; and his sway,
Not only over his associates, but
His judges, was attributed to witchcraft,
Such was his influence. I have no great faith
In any magic save that of the mine;
I therefore deem'd him wealthy. But my soul
Was roused with various feelings to seek out
This prodigy, if only to behold him.
Sieg. And did you so?
Gab. You'll hear. Chance favour'd me:
A popular affray in the public square
Drew crowds together. It was one of those
Occasions where men's souls look out of them,
And show them as they are — even in their faces:
The moment my eye met his, I exclaim'd,
'This is the man!' though he was then, as since,
With the nobles of the city. I felt sure
I had not err'd, and watch'd him long and nearly;
I noted down his form, his gesture, features,
Stature, and bearing; and amidst them all,
Midst every natural and acquired distinction,
I could discern, methought, the assassin's eye
And gladiator's heart.
Ulr. (*smiling*). The tale sounds well.
Gab. And may sound better. — He appear'd to me
One of those beings to whom Fortune bends
As she doth to the daring, and on whom
The fates of others oft depend; besides,
An indescribable sensation drew me
Near to this man, as if my point of fortune
Was to be fix'd by him. — There I was wrong.
Sieg. And may not be right now.
Gab. I follow'd him,
Solicited his notice, and obtain'd it,
Though not his friendship. It was his intention
To leave the city privately: we left it
Together, and together we arrived
In the poor town where Werner was conceal'd,
And Stralenheim was succour'd — Now we are on
The verge — *dare* you hear further?
Sieg. I must do so —
Or I have heard too much.
Gab. I saw in you
A man above his station; and if not
So high, as now I find you, in my then
Conceptions, 't was that I had rarely seen
Men such as you appear'd in height of mind
In the most high of worldly rank; you were
Poor, even to all save rags: I would have shared
My purse, though slender, with you — you refused it.
Sieg. Doth my refusal make a debt to you,
That thus you urge it?
Gab. Still you owe me something,
Though not for that; and I owed you my safety,
At least my seeming safety, when the slaves
Of Stralenheim pursued me on the grounds
That *I* had robb'd him.
Sieg. *I* conceal'd you — I,
Whom and whose house you arraign, reviving viper!
Gab. I accuse no man, save in my defence.
You, count, have made yourself accuser — judge:
Your hall 's my court, your heart is my tribunal.
Be just and *I*'ll be merciful!
Sieg. You merciful!
You! Base calumniator!
Gab. I. 'T will rest
With me at last to be so. You conceal'd me
In secret passages known to yourself,
You said, and to none else. At dead of night,

Weary with watching in the dark, and dubious
Of tracing back my way, I saw a glimmer,
Through distant crannies, of a twinkling light.
I follow'd it, and reach'd a door — a secret
Portal — which open'd to the chamber, where,
With cautious hand and slow, having first undone
As much as made a crevice of the fastening,
I look'd through and beheld a purple bed,
And on it Stralenheim! —
Sieg. Asleep! And yet
You slew him! — Wretch!
Gab. He was already slain,
And bleeding like a sacrifice. My own
Blood became ice.
Sieg. But he was all alone!
You saw none else? You did not see the —
[*He pauses from agitation.*
Gab. No,
He, whom you dare not name, nor even I
Scarce dare to recollect, was not then in
The chamber.
Sieg. (*to* Ulric). Then, my boy! thou art guiltless still:
Thou bad'st me say *I* was so once — Oh! now
Do thou as much!
Gab. Be patient! I can *not*
Recede now, though it shake the very walls
Which frown above us. You remember, — or
If not, your son does, — that the locks were changed
Beneath *his* chief inspection on the morn
Which led to this same night: how he had enter'd
He best knows; but within an antechamber,
The door of which was half ajar, I saw
A man who wash'd his bloody hands, and oft
With stern and anxious glance gazed back upon
The bleeding body — but it moved no more.
Sieg. Oh! God of fathers!
Gab. I beheld his features
As I see yours; but yours they were not, though
Resembling them — behold them in Count Ulric's!
Distinct as I beheld them, though the expression
Is not now what it then was; but it was so
When I first charged him with the crime — so lately.
Sieg. This is so —
Gab. (*interrupting him*). Nay, but hear me to the end!
Now you must do so. I conceived myself
Betray'd by you and *him* (for now I saw
There was some tie between you) into this
Pretended den of refuge, to become
The victim of your guilt; and my first thought
Was vengeance. But though arm'd with a short poniard
(Having left my sword without), I was no match
For him at any time, as had been proved
That morning — either in address or force.
I turn'd, and fled — i' the dark: chance rather than
Skill made me gain the secret door of the hall,
And thence the chamber where you slept. If I
Had found you *waking*, Heaven alone can tell
What vengeance and suspicion might have prompted;
But ne'er slept guilt as Werner slept that night.
Sieg. And yet I had horrid dreams! and such brief sleep,
The stars had not gone down when I awoke.
Why didst thou spare me? I dreamt of my father —
And now my dream is out!
Gab. 'T is not my fault,
If I have read it. Well! I fled and hid me.
Chance led me here after so many moons,
And show'd me Werner in Count Siegendorf!
Werner, whom I had sought in huts in vain,
Inhabited the palace of a sovereign!
You sought me and have found me — now you know
My secret, and may weigh its worth.
Sieg. (*after a pause*). Indeed!
Gab. Is it revenge or justice which inspires
Your meditation?
Sieg. Neither — I was weighing
The value of your secret.
Gab. You shall know it
At once: — when you were poor, and I, though poor,
Rich enough to relieve such poverty

As might have envied mine, I offer'd you
My purse — you would not share it: I 'll be franker
With you; you are wealthy, noble, trusted by
The imperial powers — you understand me?
Sieg. Yes.
Gab. Not quite. You think me venal, and scarce true:
'T is no less true, however, that my fortunes
Have made me both at present. You shall aid me;
I would have aided you, and also have
Been somewhat damaged in my name to save
Yours and your son's. Weigh well what I have said.
Sieg. Dare you await the event of a few minutes'
Deliberation?
Gab. (*casts his eyes on* Ulric, *who is leaning against a pillar*). If I should do so?
Sieg. I pledge my life for yours. Withdraw into
This tower. [*Opens a turret door.*
Gab. (*hesitatingly*). This is the second *safe* asylum
You have offer'd me.
Sieg. And was not the first so?
Gab. I know not that even now — but will approve
The second. I have still a further shield:
I did not enter Prague alone; and should I
Be put to rest with Stralenheim, there are
Some tongues without will wag in my behalf.
Be brief in your decision!
Sieg. I will be so.
My word is sacred and irrevocable
Within *these* walls, but it extends no further.
Gab. I 'll take it for so much.
Sieg. (*points to Ulric's sabre still upon the ground*). Take also *that* —
I saw you eye it eagerly, and him
Distrustfully.
Gab. (*takes up the sabre*). I will; and so provide
To sell my life — not cheaply.
[Gabor *goes into the turret, which* Siegendorf *closes.*
Sieg. (*advances to* Ulric). Now, Count Ulric!
For son I dare not call thee — What say'st thou?
Ulr. His tale is true.
Sieg. True, monster!
Ulr. Most true, father!
And you did well to listen to it: what
We know, we can provide against. He must
Be silenced.
Sieg. Ay, with half of my domains;
And with the other half, could he and thou
Unsay this villany.
Ulr. It is no time
For trifling or dissembling. I have said
His story 's true; and he too must be silenced.
Sieg. How so?
Ulr. As Stralenheim is. Are you so dull
As never to have hit on this before?
When we met in the garden, what except
Discovery in the act could make me know
His death? Or had the prince's household been
Then summon'd, would the cry for the police
Been left to such a stranger? Or should I
Have loiter'd on the way? Or could *you*, *Werner*,
The object of the baron's hate and fears,
Have fled, unless by many an hour before
Suspicion woke? I sought and fathom'd you,
Doubting if you were false or feeble: I
Perceived you were the latter; and yet so
Confiding have I found you, that I doubted
At times your weakness.
Sieg. Parricide! no less
Than common stabber! What deed of my life,
Or thought of mine, could make you deem me fit
For your accomplice?
Ulr. Father, do not raise
The devil you cannot lay between us. This
Is time for union and for action, not
For family disputes. While *you* were tortured,
Could *I* be calm? Think you that I have heard
This fellow's tale without some feeling? — You
Have taught me feeling for *you* and myself:
For whom or what else did you ever teach it?
Sieg. Oh! my dead father's curse! 't is working now.
Ulr. Let it work on! the grave will keep it down!

Ashes are feeble foes: it is more easy
To baffle such, than countermine a mole
Which winds its blind but living path beneath you.
Yet hear me still! — if *you* condemn me, yet
Remember *who* hath taught me once too often
To listen to him! *Who* proclaim'd to me
That *there were crimes* made venial by the occasion?
That passion was our nature? that the goods
Of Heaven waited on the goods of fortune?
Who show'd me his humanity secured
By his *nerves* only? *Who* deprived me of
All power to vindicate myself and race
In open day, by his disgrace which stamp'd
(It might be) bastardy on me, and on
Himself — a *felon's* brand? The man who is
At once both warm and weak invites to deeds
He longs to do, but dare not. Is it strange
That I should *act* what you could *think*? We have done
With right and wrong; and now must only ponder
Upon effects, not causes. Stralenheim,
Whose life I saved from impulse, as, *unknown*,
I would have saved a peasant's or a dog's, I slew
Known as our foe — but not from vengeance. He
Was a rock in our way which I cut through,
As doth the bolt, because it stood between us
And our true destination — but not idly.
As stranger I preserved him, and he *owed* me
His *life*: when due, I but resumed the debt.
He, you, and I stood o'er a gulf wherein
I have plunged our enemy. *You* kindled first
The torch, *you* show'd the path; now trace me that
Of safety, or let me!
Sieg. I have done with life!
Ulr. Let us have done with that which cankers life,
Familiar feuds and vain recriminations
Of things which cannot be undone. We have
No more to learn or hide: I know no fear,
And have within these very walls men who
(Although you know them not) dare venture all things.
You stand high with the state; what passes here
Will not excite her too great curiosity:
Keep your own secret, keep a steady eye,
Stir not, and speak not; — leave the rest to me:
We must have no *third* babblers thrust between us. [*Exit* ULRIC.
Sieg. (*solus*). Am I awake? are these my father's halls?
And *you* — my son? *My* son! *mine!* who have ever
Abhorr'd both mystery and blood, and yet
Am plunged into the deepest hell of both!
I must be speedy, or more will be shed —
The Hungarian's! — Ulric — he hath partisans,
It seems: I might have guess'd as much. Oh fool!
Wolves prowl in company. He hath the key
(As I too) of the opposite door which leads
Into the turret. Now then! or once more
To be the father of fresh crimes, no less
Than of the criminal! Ho! Gabor! Gabor!
[*Exit into the turret, closing the door after him.*

SCENE II

The Interior of the Turret.

GABOR *and* SIEGENDORF.

Gab. Who calls?
Sieg. I — Siegendorf! Take these, and fly!
Lose not a moment!
[*Tears off a diamond star and other jewels, and thrusts them into* GABOR'S *hand.*
Gab. What am I to do
With these?
Sieg. Whate'er you will: sell them, or hoard,
And prosper; but delay not, or you are lost!
Gab. You pledged your honour for my safety!
Sieg. And
Must thus redeem it. Fly! I am not master,
It seems, of my own castle — of my own
Retainers — nay, even of these very walls,

Or I would bid them fall and crush me! Fly!
Or you will be slain by —
Gab. Is it even so?
Farewell, then! Recollect, however, Count,
You sought this fatal interview!
Sieg. I did:
Let it not be more fatal still! — Begone!
Gab. By the same path I enter'd?
Sieg. Yes, that 's safe still:
But loiter not in Prague; you do not know
With whom you have to deal.
Gab. I know too well,
And knew it ere yourself, unhappy sire!
Farewell! [*Exit* GABOR.
Sieg. (*solus and listening*). He hath clear'd the staircase. Ah! I hear
The door sound loud behind him! He is safe!
Safe! — Oh, my father's spirit! — I am faint —
[*He leans down upon a stone seat, near the wall of the tower, in a drooping posture.*

Enter ULRIC, *with others armed, and with weapons drawn.*

Ulr. Despatch! — he 's there!
Lud. The count, my lord!
Ulr. (*recognising* SIEGENDORF). *You* here, sir!
Sieg. Yes: if you want another victim, strike!
Ulr. (*seeing him stript of his jewels*). Where is the ruffian who hath plunder'd you?
Vassals, despatch in search of him! You see
'T was as I said — the wretch hath stript my father
Of jewels which might form a prince's heirloom!
Away! I 'll follow you forthwith.
[*Exeunt all but* SIEGENDORF *and* ULRIC.
What 's this?
Where is the villain?
Sieg. There are *two*, sir: which
Are you in quest of?
Ulr. Let us hear no more
Of this: he must be found. You have not let him
Escape?
Sieg. He 's gone.
Ulr. With your connivance?
Sieg. With
My fullest, freest aid.
Ulr. Then fare you well!
[ULRIC *is going.*
Sieg. Stop! I command — entreat — implore! Oh, Ulric!
Will you then leave me?
Ulr. What! remain to be
Denounced — dragg'd, it may be, in chains; and all
By your inherent weakness, half-humanity
Selfish remorse, and temporising pity,
That sacrifices your whole race to save
A wretch to profit by our ruin! No, count,
Henceforth you have no son!
Sieg. I never had one;
And would you ne'er had borne the useless name!
Where will you go? I would not send you forth
Without protection.
Ulr. Leave that unto me.
I am not alone; nor merely the vain heir
Of your domains; a thousand, ay, ten thousand
Swords, hearts, and hands, are mine.
Sieg. The foresters!
With whom the Hungarian found you first at Frankfort!
Ulr. Yes — men — who are worthy of the name! Go tell
Your senators that they look well to Prague;
Their feast of peace was early for the times;
There are more spirits abroad than have been laid
With Wallenstein!

Enter JOSEPHINE *and* IDA.

Jos. What is 't we hear? My Siegendorf!
Thank Heav'n, I see you safe!
Sieg. Safe!
Ida. Yes, dear father!
Sieg. No, no; I have no children: never more
Call me by that worst name of parent.
Jos. What
Means my good lord!
Sieg. That you have given birth
To a demon!
Ida (*taking* ULRIC'S *hand*). Who shall dare say this of Ulric?
Sieg. Ida, beware! there 's blood upon that hand.
Ida (*stooping to kiss it*). I 'd kiss it off, though it were mine.
Sieg. It is so!
Ulr. Away! it is your father's!
[*Exit* ULRIC.

Ida. Oh, great God!
And I have loved this man!

[Ida *falls senseless;* Josephine *stands speechless with horror*

Sieg. The wretch hath slain
Them both! — My Josephine! we are now alone!
Would we had ever been so! — All is over
For me! Now open wide, my sire, thy grave;
Thy curse hath dug it deeper for thy son
In mine! The race of Siegendorf is past.

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

A DRAMA

ADVERTISEMENT

This production is founded partly on the story of a novel called *The Three Brothers*, published many years ago, from which M. G. Lewis's *Wood Demon* was also taken — and partly on the *Faust* of the great Goethe. The present publication contains the two first Parts only, and the opening chorus of the third. The rest may, perhaps, appear hereafter.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Stranger, *afterwards* Cæsar.
Arnold. Philibert.
Bourbon. Cellini.

Bertha. Olimpia.

Spirits, Soldiers, Citizens of Rome, Priests, Peasants, etc.

PART I

Scene I

A Forest.

Enter Arnold *and his mother* Bertha.

Bert. Out, hunchback!
Arn. I was born so, mother!
Bert. Out,
Thou incubus! Thou nightmare! Of seven sons,
The sole abortion!
Arn. Would that I had been so,
And never seen the light!
Bert. I would so too!
But as thou *hast* — hence, hence — and do thy best!
That back of thine may bear its burthen; 't is
More high, if not so broad as that of others.
Arn. It *bears* its burthen; — but my heart! Will it
Sustain that which you lay upon it, mother?
I love, or, at the least, I loved you: nothing
Save you, in nature, can love aught like me.
You nursed me — do not kill me!
Bert. Yes — I nursed thee,
Because thou wert my first-born, and I knew not
If there would be another unlike thee,
That monstrous sport of nature. But get hence,
And gather wood!
Arn. I will: but when I bring it,
Speak to me kindly. Though my brothers are
So beautiful and lusty, and as free
As the free chase they follow, do not spurn me:
Our milk has been the same.
Bert. As is the hedgehog's
Which sucks at midnight from the wholesome dam
Of the young bull, until the milkmaid finds
The nipple next day sore and udder dry.
Call not thy brothers brethren! Call me not
Mother; for if I brought thee forth, it was
As foolish hens at times hatch vipers, by
Sitting upon strange eggs. Out, urchin, out! [*Exit* Bertha.
Arn. (*solus*). Oh, mother! — She is gone, and I must do
Her bidding; wearily but willingly
I would fulfil it, could I only hope
A kind word in return. What shall I do?

[Arnold *begins to cut wood: in doing this he wounds one of his hands.*

My labour for the day is over now.
Accursèd be this blood that flows so fast;
For double curses will be my meed now
At home — What home? I have no home, no kin,
No kind — not made like other creatures, or
To share their sports or pleasures. Must I bleed too
Like them? Oh that each drop which falls to earth
Would rise a snake to sting them, as they have stung me!
Or that the devil, to whom they liken me,

Would aid his likeness ! If I must partake
His form, why not his power ? Is it because
I have not his will too ? For one kind word
From her who bore me would still reconcile me
Even to this hateful aspect. Let me wash
The wound.

[ARNOLD *goes to a spring, and stoops to wash his hand: he starts back.*

They are right; and Nature's mirror shows me
What she hath made me. I will not look on it
Again, and scarce dare think on 't. Hideous wretch
That I am ! The very waters mock me with
My horrid shadow — like a demon placed
Deep in the fountain to scare back the cattle
From drinking therein. [*He pauses.*
And shall I live on,
A burden to the earth, myself, and shame
Unto what brought me into life ? Thou blood
Which flowest so freely from a scratch, let me
Try if thou wilt not in a fuller stream
Pour forth my woes forever with thyself
On earth, to which I will restore at once
This hateful compound of her atoms, and
Resolve back to her elements, and take
The shape of any reptile save myself,
And make a world for myriads of new worms !
This knife ! now let me prove if it will sever
This wither'd slip of nature's nightshade — my
Vile form — from the creation, as it hath
The green bough from the forest.

[ARNOLD *places the knife in the ground, with the point upwards.*

Now 't is set,
And I can fall upon it. Yet one glance
On the fair day, which sees no foul thing like
Myself, and the sweet sun which warm'd me, but
In vain. The birds — how joyously they sing !
So let them, for I would not be lamented:
But let their merriest notes be Arnold's knell,
The fallen leaves my monument, the murmur
Of the near fountain my sole elegy.
Now, knife, stand firmly, as I fain would fall !

[*As he rushes to throw himself upon the knife, his eye is suddenly caught by the fountain, which seems in motion.*

The fountain moves without a wind: but shall
The ripple of a spring change my resolve ?
No. Yet it moves again ! The waters stir,
Not as with air, but by some subterrane
And rocking power of the internal world.
What 's here ? A mist ! No more ? —

[*A cloud comes from the fountain. He stands gazing upon it; it is dispelled, and a tall black man comes towards him.*

Arn. What would you ? Speak !
Spirit or man ?

Stran. As man is both, why not
Say both in one ?

Arn. Your form is man's, and yet
You may be devil.

Stran. So many men are that
Which is so call'd or thought, that you may add me
To which you please, without much wrong to either.
But come: you wish to kill yourself; — pursue
Your purpose.

Arn. You have interrupted me.

Stran. What is that resolution which can e'er
Be interrupted ? If I be the devil
You deem, a single moment would have made you
Mine, and for ever, by your suicide;
And yet my coming saves you.

Arn. I said not
You *were* the demon, but that your approach
Was like one.

Stran. Unless you keep company
With him (and you seem scarce used to such high
Society) you can't tell how he approaches;
And for his aspect, look upon the fountain,
And then on me, and judge which of us twain
Looks likest what the boors believe to be
Their cloven-footed terror.

Arn. Do you — dare *you*
To taunt me with my born deformity ?

Stran. Were I to taunt a buffalo with this
Cloven foot of thine, or the swift dromedary

With thy sublime of humps, the animals
Would revel in the compliment. And yet
Both beings are more swift, more strong, more mighty
In action and endurance than thyself,
And all the fierce and fair of the same kind
With thee. Thy form is natural: 't was only
Nature's mistaken largess to bestow
The gifts which are of others upon man.
Arn. Give me the strength then of the buffalo's foot,
When he spurns high the dust, beholding his
Near enemy; or let me have the long
And patient swiftness of the desert-ship,
The helmless dromedary! — and I 'll bear
Thy fiendish sarcasm with a saintly patience.
Stran. I will.
Arn. (*with surprise*). Thou *canst?*
Stran. Perhaps. Would you aught else?
Arn. Thou mockest me.
Stran. Not I. Why should I mock
What all are mocking? That 's poor sport, methinks.
To talk to thee in human language (for
Thou canst not yet speak mine), the forester
Hunts not the wretched coney, but the boar,
Or wolf, or lion, leaving paltry game
To petty burghers, who leave once a year
Their walls, to fill their household caldrons with
Such scullion prey. The meanest gibe at thee, —
Now *I* can mock the mightiest.
Arn. Then waste not
Thy time on me: I seek thee not.
Stran. Your thoughts
Are not far from me. Do not send me back:
I am not so easily recall'd to do
Good service.
Arn. What wilt thou do for me?
Stran. Change
Shapes with you, if you will, since yours so irks you;
Or form you to your wish in any shape.
Arn. Oh! then you are indeed the demon, for
Nought else would wittingly wear mine.
Stran. I 'll show thee
The brightest which the world e'er bore, and give thee
Thy choice.
Arn. On what condition?
Stran. There 's a question!
An hour ago you would have given your soul
To look like other men, and now you pause
To wear the form of heroes.
Arn. No; I will not.
I must not compromise my soul.
Stran. What soul,
Worth naming so, would dwell in such a carcass?
Arn. 'T is an aspiring one, whate'er the tenement
In which it is mislodged. But name your compact:
Must it be sign'd in blood?
Stran. Not in your own.
Arn. Whose blood then?
Stran. We will talk of that hereafter.
But I 'll be moderate with you, for I see
Great things within you. You shall have no bond
But your own will, no contract save your deeds.
Are you content?
Arn. I take thee at thy word.
Stran. Now then! —

[*The Stranger approaches the fountain and turns to* Arnold.

A little of your blood.
Arn. For what?
Stran. To mingle with the magic of the waters,
And make the charm effective.
Arn. (*holding out his wounded arm*). Take it all.
Stran. Not now. A few drops will suffice for this.

[*The Stranger takes some of* Arnold's *blood in his hand, and casts it into the fountain*

Stran. Shadows of beauty!
Shadows of power!
Rise to your duty —
This is the hour!
Walk lovely and pliant
From the depth of this fountain,
As the cloud-shapen giant
Bestrides the Hartz Mountain.
Come as ye were,
That our eyes may behold
The model in air
Of the form I will mould,
Bright as the Iris
When ether is spann'd; —

Such *his* desire is, [*Pointing to* ARNOLD.
Such my command!
Demons heroic —
Demons who wore
The form of the stoic
Or sophist of yore —
Or the shape of each victor,
From Macedon's boy
To each high Roman's picture,
Who breathed to destroy —
Shadows of beauty!
Shadows of power!
Up to your duty —
This is the hour!

[*Various Phantoms arise from the waters, and pass in succession before the Stranger and* ARNOLD.

Arn. What do I see?
Stran. The black-eyed Roman, with
The eagle's beak between those eyes which ne'er
Beheld a conqueror, or look'd along
The land he made not Rome's, while Rome became
His, and all theirs who heir'd his very name.
Arn. The phantom's bald; my quest is beauty. Could I
Inherit but his fame with his defects!
Stran. His brow was girt with laurels more than hairs.
You see his aspect — choose it, or reject.
I can but promise you his form; his fame
Must be long sought and fought for.
Arn. I will fight too,
But not as a mock Cæsar. Let him pass;
His aspect may be fair, but suits me not.
Stran. Then you are far more difficult to please
Than Cato's sister, or than Brutus' mother,
Or Cleopatra at sixteen — an age
When love is not less in the eye than heart.
But be it so! Shadow, pass on!
[*The phantom of Julius Cæsar disappears.*
Arn. And can it
Be, that the man who shook the earth is gone,
And left no footstep?
Stran. There you err. His substance
Left graves enough, and woes enough, and fame
More than enough to track his memory;
But for his shadow, 'tis no more than yours,
Except a little longer and less crook'd
I' the sun. Behold another!
[*A second phantom passes.*
Arn. Who is he?
Stran. He was the fairest and the bravest of
Athenians. Look upon him well.
Arn. He is
More lovely than the last. How beautiful!
Stran. Such was the curlèd son of Clinias; — wouldst thou
Invest thee with his form?
Arn. Would that I had
Been born with it! But since I may choose further,
I will *look* further.
[*The shade of Alcibiades disappears.*
Stran. Lo! behold again!
Arn. What! that low, swarthy, short-nosed, round-eyed satyr,
With the wide nostrils and Silenus' aspect,
The splay feet and low stature! I had better
Remain that which I am.
Stran. And yet he was
The earth's perfection of all mental beauty,
And personification of all virtue.
But you reject him?
Arn. If his form could bring me
That which redeem'd it — no.
Stran. I have no power
To promise that; but you may try, and find it
Easier in such a form, or in your own.
Arn. No. I was not born for philosophy,
Though I have that about me which has need on't.
Let him fleet on.
Stran. Be air, thou hemlock-drinker!
[*The shadow of Socrates disappears: another rises.*
Arn. What's here? whose broad brow and whose curly beard
And manly aspect look like Hercules,
Save that his jocund eye hath more of Bacchus
Than the sad purger of the infernal world,
Leaning dejected on his club of conquest,
As if he knew the worthlessness of those
For whom he had fought.
Stran. It was the man who lost
The ancient world for love.
Arn. I cannot blame him,
Since I have risk'd my soul because I find not
That which he exchanged the earth for.
Stran. Since so far
You seem congenial, will you wear his features?

Arn. No. As you leave me choice, I am difficult,
If but to see the heroes I should ne'er
Have seen else on this side of the dim shore
Whence they float back before us.
Stran. Hence, triumvir!
Thy Cleopatra 's waiting.
[*The shade of Antony disappears: another rises.*
Arn. Who is this?
Who truly looketh like a demigod,
Blooming and bright, with golden hair, and stature,
If not more high than mortal, yet immortal
In all that nameless bearing of his limbs,
Which he wears as the sun his rays — a something
Which shines from him, and yet is but the flashing
Emanation of a thing more glorious still.
Was *he e'er human only?*
Stran. Let the earth speak,
If there be atoms of him left, or even
Of the more solid gold that form'd his urn.
Arn. Who was this glory of mankind?
Stran. The shame
Of Greece in peace, her thunderbolt in war —
Demetrius the Macedonian, and
Taker of cities.
Arn. Yet one shadow more.
Stran. (*addressing the shadow*). Get thee to Lamia's lap!
[*The shade of Demetrius Poliorcetes vanishes: another rises.*
I 'll fit you still,
Fear not, my hunchback: if the shadows of
That which existed please not your nice taste,
I 'll animate the ideal marble, till
Your soul be reconciled to her new garment.
Arn. Content! I will fix here.
Stran. I must commend
Your choice. The godlike son of the sea-goddess,
The unshorn boy of Peleus, with his locks
As beautiful and clear as the amber waves
Of rich Pactolus, roll'd o'er sands of gold,
Soften'd by intervening crystal, and
Rippled like flowing waters by the wind,
All vow'd to Sperchius as they were — behold them!
And *him* — as he stood by Polixena,
With sanction'd and with soften'd love, before
The altar, gazing on his Trojan bride,
With some remorse within for Hector slain
And Priam weeping, mingled with deep passion
For the sweet downcast virgin whose young hand
Trembled in *his* who slew her brother. So
He stood i' the temple! Look upon him as
Greece look'd her last upon her best, the instant
Ere Paris' arrow flew.
Arn. I gaze upon him
As if I were his soul, whose form shall soon
Envelope mine.
Stran. You have done well. The greatest
Deformity should only barter with
The extremest beauty, if the proverb 's true
Of mortals, that extremes meet.
Arn. Come! Be quick!
I am impatient.
Stran. As a youthful beauty
Before her glass. *You both* see what is not,
But dream it is what must be.
Arn. Must I wait?
Stran. No; that were a pity. But a word or two:
His stature is twelve cubits; would you so far
Outstep these times, and be a Titan? Or
(To talk canonically) wax a son
Of Anak?
Arn. Why not?
Stran. Glorious ambition!
I love thee most in dwarfs! A mortal of
Philistine stature would have gladly pared
His own Goliath down to a slight David:
But thou, my manikin, wouldst soar a show
Rather than hero. Thou shalt be indulged,
If such be thy desire; and yet, by being
A little less removed from present men
In figure, thou canst sway them more; for all
Would rise against thee now, as if to hunt
A new-found mammoth; and their cursèd engines,
Their culverins, and so forth, would find way
Through our friend's armour there, with greater ease
Than the adulterer's arrow through his heel
Which Thetis had forgotten to baptize
In Styx.

Arn. Then let it be as thou deem'st best.
Stran. Thou shalt be beauteous as the thing thou seest,
And strong as what it was, and —
Arn. I ask not
For valour, since deformity is daring.
It is its essence to o'ertake mankind
By heart and soul, and make itself the equal —
Ay, the superior of the rest. There is
A spur in its halt movements, to become
All that the others cannot, in such things
As still are free to both, to compensate
For stepdame Nature's avarice at first.
They woo with fearless deeds the smiles of fortune,
And oft, like Timour the lame Tartar, win them.
Stran. Well spoken! And thou doubtless wilt remain
Form'd as thou art. I may dismiss the mould
Of shadow, which must turn to flesh to incase
This daring soul which could achieve no less
Without it.
Arn. Had no power presented me
The possibility of change, I would
Have done the best which spirit may to make
Its way with all deformity's dull, deadly,
Discouraging weight upon me, like a mountain,
In feeling, on my heart as on my shoulders —
A hateful and unsightly molehill to
The eyes of happier men. I would have look'd
On beauty in that sex which is the type
Of all we know or dream of beautiful
Beyond the world they brighten, with a sigh —
Not of love, but despair; nor sought to win,
Though to a heart all love, what could not love me
In turn, because of this vile crooked clog
Which makes me lonely. Nay, I could have borne
It all, had not my mother spurn'd me from her.
The she-bear licks her cubs into a sort
Of shape; — my dam beheld my shape was hopeless.
Had she exposed me, like the Spartan, ere
I knew the passionate part of life, I had
Been a clod of the valley, — happier nothing
Than what I am. But even thus, the lowest,
Ugliest, and meanest of mankind, what courage
And perseverance could have done, perchance
Had made me something — as it has made heroes
Of the same mould as mine. You lately saw me
Master of my own life, and quick to quit it;
And he who is so is the master of
Whatever dreads to die.
Stran. Decide between
What you have been, or will be.
Arn. I have done so.
You have open'd brighter prospects to my eyes,
And sweeter to my heart. As I am now,
I might be fear'd, admired, respected, loved
Of all save those next to me, of whom I
Would be belovèd. As thou showest me
A choice of forms, I take the one I view.
Haste! haste!
Stran. And what shall *I* wear?
Arn. Surely, he
Who can command all forms will choose the highest,
Something superior even to that which was
Pelides now before us. Perhaps *his*
Who slew him, that of Paris: or — still higher —
The poet's god, clothed in such limbs as are
Themselves a poetry.
Stran. Less will content me;
For I, too, love a change.
Arn. Your aspect is
Dusky, but not uncomely.
Stran. If I chose,
I might be whiter; but I have a penchant
For black — it is so honest, and besides
Can neither blush with shame nor pale with fear:
But I have worn it long enough of late,
And now I'll take your figure.
Arn. Mine!
Stran. Yes. You

Shall change with Thetis' son, and I with Bertha
Your mother's offspring. People have their tastes;
You have yours — I mine.
Arn. Despatch! despatch!
Stran. Even so.

[*The Stranger takes some earth and moulds it along the turf, and then addresses the phantom of Achilles.*

Beautiful shadow
Of Thetis's boy!
Who sleeps in the meadow
Whose grass grows o'er Troy:
From the red earth, like Adam,
Thy likeness I shape,
As the being who made him,
Whose actions I ape.
Thou clay, be all glowing,
Till the rose in his cheek
Be as fair as, when blowing,
It wears its first streak!
Ye violets, I scatter,
Now turn into eyes!
And thou, sunshiny water,
Of blood take the guise!
Let these hyacinth boughs
Be his long flowing hair,
And wave o'er his brows,
As thou wavest in air!
Let his heart be this marble
I tear from the rock!
But his voice as the warble
Of birds on yon oak!
Let his flesh be the purest
Of mould, in which grew
The lily-root surest,
And drank the best dew!
Let his limbs be the lightest
Which clay can compound,
And his aspect the brightest
On earth to be found!
Elements, near me,
Be mingled and stirr'd,
Know me, and hear me,
And leap to my word!
Sunbeams, awaken
This earth's animation!
'T is done! He hath taken
His stand in creation!

[ARNOLD *falls senseless; his soul passes into the shape of Achilles, which rises from the ground; while the phantom has disappeared, part by part, as the figure was formed from the earth.*

Arn. (*in his new form*). I love, and I shall be beloved! Oh, life!
At last I feel thee! Glorious spirit!
Stran. Stop!
What shall become of your abandon'd garment,
Yon hump, and lump, and clog of ugliness,
Which late you wore, or were?
Arn. Who cares? Let wolves
And vultures take it, if they will.
Stran. And if
They do, and are not scared by it, you 'll say
It must be peace-time, and no better fare
Abroad i' the fields.
Arn. Let us but leave it there;
No matter what becomes on 't.
Stran. That 's ungracious,
If not ungrateful. Whatsoe'er it be,
It hath sustain'd your soul full many a day.
Arn. Ay, as the dunghill may conceal a gem
Which is now set in gold, as jewels should be.
Stran. But if I give another form, it must be
By fair exchange, not robbery. For they
Who make men without women's aid have long
Had patents for the same, and do not love
Your interlopers. The devil may take men,
Not make them, — though he reap the benefit
Of the original workmanship: and therefore
Some one must be found to assume the shape
You have quitted.
Arn. Who would do so?
Stran. That I know not,
And therefore I must.
Arn. You!
Stran. I said it ere
You inhabited your present dome of beauty.
Arn. True. I forget all things in the new joy
Of this immortal change.
Stran. In a few moments
I will be as you were, and you shall see
Yourself for ever by you, as your shadow.
Arn. I would be spared this.
Stran. But it cannot be.
What! shrink already, being what you are,
From seeing what you were?
Arn. Do as thou wilt.
Stran. (*to the late form of* ARNOLD, *extended on the earth*).
Clay! not dead, but soul-less!
Though no man would choose thee,
An immortal no less

Deigns not to refuse thee.
Clay thou art; and unto spirit
All clay is of equal merit.
Fire! *without* which nought can live;
Fire! but *in* which nought can live,
Save the fabled salamander,
Or immortal souls, which wander,
Praying what doth not forgive,
Howling for a drop of water,
Burning in a quenchless lot:
Fire! the only element
Where nor fish, beast, bird, nor worm,
Save the worm which dieth not,
Can preserve a moment's form,
But must with thyself be blent:
Fire! man's safeguard and his slaughter:
Fire! Creation's first-born daughter,
And Destruction's threaten'd son
When heaven with the world hath done:
Fire! assist me to renew
Life in what lies in my view
Stiff and cold!
His resurrection rests with me and you!
One little, marshy spark of flame —
And he again shall seem the same;
But I his spirit's place shall hold!

[*An ignis-fatuus flits through the wood and rests on the brow of the body. The Stranger disappears: the body rises.*

Arn. (*in his new form*). Oh! horrible!
Stran. (*in* Arnold's *late shape*). What! tremblest thou?
Arn. Not so —
I merely shudder. Where is fled the shape
Thou lately worest?
Stran. To the world of shadows.
But let us thread the present. Whither wilt thou?
Arn. Must thou be my companion?
Stran. Wherefore not?
Your betters keep worse company.
Arn. *My* betters!
Stran. Oh! you wax proud, I see, of your new form:
I'm glad of that. Ungrateful too! That's well;
You improve apace; — two changes in an instant,
And you are old in the world's ways already.
But bear with me: indeed you'll find me useful
Upon your pilgrimage. But come, pronounce
Where shall we now be errant?
Arn. Where the world
Is thickest, that I may behold it in
Its workings.
Stran. That's to say, where there is war
And woman in activity. Let's see!
Spain — Italy — the new Atlantic world —
Afric, with all its Moors. In very truth,
There is small choice: the whole race are just now
Tugging as usual at each other's hearts.
Arn. I have heard great things of Rome.
Stran. A goodly choice —
And scarce a better to be found on earth,
Since Sodom was put out. The field is wide too;
For now the Frank, and Hun, and Spanish scion
Of the old Vandals are at play along
The sunny shores of the world's garden.
Arn. How
Shall we proceed?
Stran. Like gallants, on good coursers.
What ho! my chargers! Never yet were better,
Since Phaeton was upset into the Po.
Our pages too!

Enter two Pages, with four coal-black horses.

Arn. A noble sight!
Stran. And of
A nobler breed. Match me in Barbary,
Or your Kochlini race of Araby,
With these!
Arn. The mighty steam, which volumes high
From their proud nostrils, burns the very air;
And sparks of flame, like dancing fire-flies, wheel
Around their manes, as common insects swarm
Round common steeds towards sunset.
Stran. Mount, my lord:
They and I are your servitors.
Arn. And these
Our dark-eyed pages — what may be their names?
Stran. You shall baptize them.
Arn. What! in holy water?
Stran. Why not? The deeper sinner, better saint.
Arn. They are beautiful, and cannot, sure, be demons.
Stran. True; the devil's always ugly; and your beauty
Is never diabolical.
Arn. I'll call him

Who bears the golden horn, and wears such bright
And blooming aspect, *Huon*; for he looks
Like to the lovely boy lost in the forest,
And never found till now. And for the other
And darker, and more thoughtful, who smiles not,
But looks as serious though serene as night,
He shall be *Memnon*, from the Ethiop king
Whose statue turns a harper once a day.
And you?
Stran. I have ten thousand names, and twice
As many attributes; but as I wear
A human shape, will take a human name.
Arn. More human than the shape (though it was mine once)
I trust.
Stran. Then call me Cæsar.
Arn. Why, that name
Belongs to empires, and has been but borne
By the world's lords.
Stran. And therefore fittest for
The devil in disguise — since so you deem me,
Unless you call me pope instead.
Arn. Well, then,
Cæsar thou shalt be. For myself, my name
Shall be plain Arnold still.
Cæs. We ’ll add a title —
'Count Arnold:' it hath no ungracious sound,
And will look well upon a billet-doux.
Arn. Or in an order for a battle-field.
Cæs. (*sings*). To horse! to horse! my coal-black steed
Paws the ground and snuffs the air!
There ’s not a foal of Arab's breed
More knows whom he must bear;
On the hill he will not tire,
Swifter as it waxes higher;
In the marsh he will not slacken,
On the plain be overtaken;
In the wave he will not sink,
Nor pause at the brook's side to drink;
In the race he will not pant,
In the combat he ’ll not faint;
On the stones he will not stumble,
Time nor toil shall make him humble;
In the stall he will not stiffen,
But be wingèd as a griffin,
Only flying with his feet:
And will not such a voyage be sweet?
Merrily! merrily! never unsound,
Shall our bonny black horses skim over the ground!
From the Alps to the Caucasus ride we, or fly!
For we ’ll leave them behind in the glance of an eye.
[*They mount their horses, and disappear.*

SCENE II

A Camp before the Walls of Rome.

ARNOLD *and* CÆSAR.

Cæs. You are well enter'd now.
Arn. Ay; but my path
Has been o'er carcasses: mine eyes are full
Of blood.
Cæs. Then wipe them, and see clearly. Why!
Thou art a conqueror; the chosen knight
And free companion of the gallant Bourbon,
Late constable of France: and now to be
Lord of the city which hath been earth's lord
Under its emperors, and — changing sex,
Not sceptre, an hermaphrodite of empire —
Lady of the old world.
Arn. How *old?* What! are there
New worlds?
Cæs. To *you.* You ’ll find there are such shortly,
By its rich harvests, new disease, and gold;
From one *half* of the world named a *whole* new one,
Because you know no better than the dull
And dubious notice of your eyes and ears.
Arn. I ’ll trust them.
Cæs. Do! They will deceive you sweetly,
And that is better than the bitter truth.
Arn. Dog!
Cæs. Man!
Arn. Devil!
Cæs. Your obedient humble servant.
Arn. Say *master* rather. Thou hast lured me on,
Through scenes of blood and lust, till I am here.
Cæs. And where wouldst *thou* be?
Arn. Oh, at peace — in peace!
Cæs. And where is that which is so? From the star
To the winding worm, all life is motion; and
In life *commotion* is the extremest point
Of life. The planet wheels till it becomes
A comet, and destroying as it sweeps

The stars, goes out. The poor worm winds its way,
Living upon the death of other things,
But still, like them, must live and die, the subject
Of something which has made it live and die.
You must obey what all obey, the rule
Of fix'd necessity: against her edict
Rebellion prospers not.
Arn. And when it prospers —
Cæs. 'T is no rebellion.
Arn. Will it prosper now?
Cæs. The Bourbon hath given orders for the assault,
And by the dawn there will be work.
Arn. Alas!
And shall the city yield? I see the giant
Abode of the true God, and his true saint,
Saint Peter, rear its dome and cross into
That sky whence Christ ascended from the cross,
Which his blood made a badge of glory and
Of joy (as once of torture unto him,
God and God's Son, man's sole and only refuge).
Cæs. 'T is there, and shall be.
Arn. What?
Cæs. The crucifix
Above, and many altar shrines below.
Also some culverins upon the walls,
And harquebusses, and what not; besides
The men who are to kindle them to death
Of other men.
Arn. And those scarce mortal arches,
Pile above pile of everlasting wall,
The theatre where emperors and their subjects
(Those subjects *Romans*) stood at gaze upon
The battles of the monarchs of the wild
And wood, the lion and his tusky rebels
Of the then untamed desert, brought to joust
In the arena (as right well they might,
When they had left no human foe unconquer'd);
Made even the forest pay its tribute of
Life to their amphitheatre, as well
As Dacia men to die the eternal death
For a sole instant's pastime, and 'Pass on
To a new gladiator!' — Must it fall?
Cæs. The city, or the amphitheatre?
The church, or one, or all? for you confound
Both them and me.
Arn. To-morrow sounds the assault
With the first cock-crow.
Cæs. Which, if it end with
The evening's first nightingale, will be
Something new in the annals of great sieges;
For men must have their prey after long toil.
Arn. The sun goes down as calmly, and perhaps
More beautifully, than he did on Rome
On the day Remus leapt her wall.
Cæs. I saw him.
Arn. You!
Cæs. Yes, sir. You forget I am or was
Spirit, till I took up with your cast shape
And a worse name. I 'm Cæsar and a hunch-back
Now. Well! the first of Cæsars was a bald-head,
And loved his laurels better as a wig
(So history says) than as a glory. Thus
The world runs on, but we 'll be merry still.
I saw your Romulus (simple as I am)
Slay his own twin, quick-born of the same womb,
Because he leapt a ditch ('t was then no wall,
Whate'er it now be); and Rome's earliest cement
Was brother's blood; and if its native blood
Be spilt till the choked Tiber be as red
As e'er 't was yellow, it will never wear
The deep hue of the ocean and the earth,
Which the great robber sons of fratricide
Have made their never-ceasing scene of slaughter
For ages.
Arn. But what have these done, their far
Remote descendants, who have lived in peace,
The peace of heaven, and in her sunshine of
Piety?
Cæs. And what had *they* done, whom the old
Romans o'erswept? — Hark!
Arn. They are soldiers singing
A reckless roundelay, upon the eve
Of many deaths, it may be of their own.
Cæs. And why should they not sing as well as swans?
They are black ones, to be sure.
Arn. So, you are learn'd,
I see, too?
Cæs. In my grammar, certes. I

Was educated for a monk of all times,
And once I was well versed in the forgotten
Etruscan letters, and — were I so minded —
Could make their hieroglyphics plainer than
Your alphabet.
Arn. And wherefore do you not?
Cæs. It answers better to resolve the alphabet
Back into hieroglyphics. Like your statesman,
And prophet, pontiff, doctor, alchymist,
Philosopher, and what not, they have built
More Babels, without new dispersion, than
The stammering young ones of the flood's dull ooze,
Who fail'd and fled each other. Why? why, marry,
Because no man could understand his neighbour.
They are wiser now, and will not separate
For nonsense. Nay, it is their brotherhood,
Their Shibboleth, their Koran, Talmud, their
Cabala; their best brick-work, wherewithal
They build more —
Arn. (*interrupting him*). Oh, thou everlasting sneerer!
Be silent! How the soldiers' rough strain seems
Soften'd by distance to a hymn-like cadence!
Listen!
Cæs. Yes. I have heard the angels sing.
Arn. And demons howl.
Cæs. And man too. Let us listen:
I love all music.

Song of the Soldiers within.

The black bands came over
The Alps and their snow;
With Bourbon, the rover,
They pass'd the broad Po.
We have beaten all foemen,
We have captured a king,
We have turn'd back on no men,
And so let us sing!
Here 's the Bourbon for ever!
Though pennyless all,
We 'll have one more endeavour
At yonder old wall.
With the Bourbon we 'll gather
At day-dawn before
The gates, and together
Or break or climb o'er
The wall: on the ladder
As mounts each firm foot,
Our shout shall grow gladder,
And death only be mute.
With the Bourbon we 'll mount o'er
The walls of old Rome,
And who then shall count o'er
The spoils of each dome?
Up! up with the lily!
And down with the keys!
In old Rome, the seven-hilly,
We 'll revel at ease.
Her streets shall be gory,
Her Tiber all red,
And her temples so hoary
Shall clang with our tread.
Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
The Bourbon for aye!
Of our song bear the burden!
And fire, fire away!
With Spain for the vanguard,
Our varied host comes;
And next to the Spaniard
Beat Germany's drums;
And Italy's lances
Are couch'd at their mother;
But our leader from France is,
Who warr'd with his brother.
Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
Sans country or home,
We 'll follow the Bourbon,
To plunder old Rome.

Cæs. An indifferent song
For those within the walls, methinks, to hear.
Arn. Yes, if they keep to their chorus. But here comes
The general with his chiefs and men of trust.
A goodly rebel!

Enter the Constable Bourbon '*cum suis,' etc. etc.*

Phil. How now, noble prince,
You are not cheerful?
Bourb. Why should I be so?
Phil. Upon the eve of conquest such as ours,
Most men would be so.
Bourb. If I were secure!
Phil. Doubt not our soldiers. Were the walls of adamant,
They 'd crack them. Hunger is a sharp artillery.
Bourb. That they will falter is my least of fears.

That they will be repulsed, with Bourbon for
Their chief, and all their kindled appetites
To marshal them on — were those hoary walls
Mountains, and those who guard them like the gods
Of the old fables, I would trust my Titans; —
But now —
Phil. They are but men who war with mortals.
Bourb. True: but those walls have girded in great ages,
And sent forth mighty spirits. The past earth
And present phantom of imperious Rome
Is peopled with those warriors; and methinks
They flit along the eternal city's rampart,
And stretch their glorious, gory, shadowy hands,
And beckon me away!
Phil. So let them! Wilt thou
Turn back from shadowy menaces of shadows?
Bourb. They do not menace me. I could have faced,
Methinks, a Sylla's menace; but they clasp,
And raise, and wring their dim and death-like hands,
And with their thin aspen faces and fix'd eyes
Fascinate mine. Look there!
Phil. I look upon
A lofty battlement.
Bourb. And there!
Phil. Not even
A guard in sight; they wisely keep below,
Shelter'd by the gray parapet from some
Stray bullet of our lansquenets, who might
Practise in the cool twilight.
Bourb. You are blind.
Phil. If seeing nothing more than may be seen
Be so.
Bourb. A thousand years have mann'd the walls
With all their heroes, — the last Cato stands
And tears his bowels, rather than survive
The liberty of that I would enslave.
And the first Cæsar with his triumphs flits
From battlement to battlement.
Phil. Then conquer
The walls for which he conquer'd and be greater!
Bourb. True: so I will, or perish.
Phil. You can *not.*
In such an enterprise to die is rather
The dawn of an eternal day, than death.
[*Count* Arnold *and* Cæsar *advance.*
Cæs. And the mere men — do they too sweat beneath
The noon of this same ever-scorching glory?
Bourb. Ah!
Welcome the bitter hunchback! and his master,
The beauty of our host, and brave as beauteous,
And generous as lovely. We shall find
Work for you both ere morning.
Cæs. You will find,
So please your highness, no less for yourself.
Bourb. And if I do, there will not be a labourer
More forward, hunchback!
Cæs. You may well say so,
For *you* have seen that back — as general,
Placed in the rear in action — but your foes
Have never seen it.
Bourb. That 's a fair retort,
For I provoked it: — but the Bourbon's breast
Has been, and ever shall be, far advanced
In danger's face as yours, were you the *devil.*
Cæs. And if I were, I might have saved myself
The toil of coming here.
Phil. Why so?
Cæs. One half
Of your brave bands of their own bold accord
Will go to him, the other half be sent,
More swiftly, not less surely.
Bourb. Arnold, your
Slight crooked friend 's as snake-like in his words
As in his deeds.
Cæs. Your highness much mistakes me.
The first snake was a flatterer — I am none;
And for my deeds, I only sting when stung.
Bourb. You are brave, and that 's enough for me; and quick
In speech as sharp in action — and that 's more.
I am not alone a soldier, but the soldiers'

Comrade.
Cæs. They are but bad company, your highness;
And worse even for their friends than foes, as being
More permanent acquaintance.
Phil. How now, fellow !
Thou waxest insolent, beyond the privilege
Of a buffoon.
Cæs. You mean I speak the truth.
I 'll lie — it is as easy: then you 'll praise me
For calling you a hero.
Bourb. Philibert !
Let him alone; he 's brave, and ever has
Been first, with that swart face and mountain shoulder,
In field or storm, and patient in starvation;
And for his tongue, the camp is full of licence,
And the sharp stinging of a lively rogue
Is, to my mind, far preferable to
The gross, dull, heavy, gloomy execration
Of a mere famish'd, sullen, grumbling slave,
Whom nothing can convince save a full meal,
And wine, and sleep, and a few maravedis,
With which he deems him rich.
Cæs. It would be well
If the earth's princes ask'd no more.
Bourb. Be silent !
Cæs. Ay, but not idle. Work yourself with words !
You have few to speak.
Phil. What means the audacious prater ?
Cæs. To prate, like other prophets.
Bourb. Philibert !
Why will you vex him ? Have we not enough
To think on ? Arnold ! I will lead the attack
To-morrow.
Arn. I have heard as much, my lord.
Bourb. And you will follow ?
Arn. Since I must not lead.
Bourb. 'T is necessary for the further daring
Of our too needy army, that their chief
Plant the first foot upon the foremost ladder's
First step.
Cæs. Upon its topmost, let us hope:
So shall he have his full deserts.
Bourb. The world's
Great capital perchance is ours to-morrow.
Through every change the seven-hill'd city hath
Retain'd her sway o'er nations, and the Cæsars
But yielded to the Alarics, the Alarics
Unto the pontiffs. Roman, Goth, or priest,
Still the world's masters ! Civilised, barbarian,
Or saintly, still the walls of Romulus
Have been the circus of an empire. Well !
'T was *their* turn — now 't is ours; and let us hope
That we will fight as well, and rule much better.
Cæs. No doubt, the camp 's the school of civic rights.
What would you make of Rome ?
Bourb. That which it was.
Cæs. In Alaric's time ?
Bourb. No, slave ! in the first Cæsar's,
Whose name you bear like other curs —
Cæs. And kings !
'T is a great name for blood-hounds.
Bourb. There 's a demon
In that fierce rattlesnake thy tongue. Wilt never
Be serious ?
Cæs. On the eve of battle, no; —
That were not soldier-like. 'T is for the general
To be more pensive: we adventurers
Must be more cheerful. Wherefore should we think ?
Our tutelar deity, in a leader's shape,
Takes care of us. Keep thought aloof from hosts !
If the knaves take to thinking, you will have
To crack those walls alone.
Bourb. You may sneer, since
'T is lucky for you that you fight no worse for 't.
Cæs. I thank you for the freedom; 't is the only
Pay I have taken in your highness' service.
Bourb. Well, sir, to-morrow you shall pay yourself.
Look on those towers; they hold my treasury:
But, Philibert, we 'll in to council. Arnold,
We would request your presence.
Arn. Prince ! my service
Is yours, as in the field.
Bourb. In both we prize it,
And yours will be a post of trust at daybreak.

Cæs. And mine?
Bourb. To follow glory with the Bourbon.
Good night!
Arn. (*to* CÆSAR). Prepare our armour for the assault,
And wait within my tent.
[*Exeunt* BOURBON, ARNOLD, PHILIBERT, *&c.*
Cæs. (*solus*). Within thy tent!
Think'st thou that I pass from thee with my presence?
Or that this crooked coffer, which contain'd
Thy principle of life, is aught to me
Except a mask? And these are men, forsooth!
Heroes and chiefs, the flower of Adam's bastards!
This is the consequence of giving matter
The power of thought. It is a stubborn substance,
And thinks chaotically, as it acts,
Ever relapsing into its first elements.
Well! I must play with these poor puppets: 't is
The spirit's pastime in his idler hours.
When I grow weary of it, I have business
Amongst the stars, which these poor creatures deem
Were made for them to look at. 'T were a jest now
To bring one down amongst them, and set fire
Unto their anthill: how the pismires then
Would scamper o'er the scalding soil, and, ceasing
From tearing down each other's nests, pipe forth
One universal orison! Ha! ha!
[*Exit* CÆSAR.

PART II

SCENE I

Before the Walls of Rome.—The assault: the army in motion, with ladders to scale the walls; BOURBON, *with a white scarf over his armour, foremost.*

Chorus of Spirits in the air.

1

'T is the morn, but dim and dark.
Whither flies the silent lark?
Whither shrinks the clouded sun?
Is the day indeed begun?
Nature's eye is melancholy
O'er the city high and holy:
But without there is a din
Should arouse the saints within,
And revive the heroic ashes
Round which yellow Tiber dashes.
Oh ye seven hills! awaken,
Ere your very base be shaken!

2

Hearken to the steady stamp!
Mars is in their every tramp!
Not a step is out of tune,
As the tides obey the moon!
On they march, though to self-slaughter,
Regular as rolling water,
Whose high waves o'ersweep the border
Of huge moles, but keep their order,
Breaking only rank by rank.
Hearken to the armour's clank!
Look down o'er each frowning warrior,
How he glares upon the barrier:
Look on each step of each ladder,
As the stripes that streak an adder.

3

Look upon the bristling wall,
Mann'd without an interval!
Round and round, and tier on tier,
Cannon's black mouth, shining spear,
Lit match, bell-mouth'd musquetoon,
Gaping to be murderous soon.
All the warlike gear of old,
Mix'd with what we now behold,
In this strife, 'twixt old and new,
Gather like a locusts' crew.
Shade of Remus! 't is a time
Awful as thy brother's crime!
Christians war against Christ's shrine:—
Must its lot be like to thine?

4

Near—and near—and nearer still,
As the earthquake saps the hill,
First with trembling, hollow motion,
Like a scarce-awaken'd ocean,
Then with stronger shock and louder,
Till the rocks are crush'd to powder,—
Onward sweeps the rolling host!
Heroes of the immortal boast!
Mighty chiefs! eternal shadows!
First flowers of the bloody meadows
Which encompass Rome, the mother
Of a people without brother!
Will you sleep when nations' quarrels
Plough the root up of your laurels?
Ye who weep o'er Carthage burning,
Weep not—*strike!* for Rome is mourning!

5

Onward sweep the varied nations!
Famine long hath dealt their rations.
To the wall with hate and hunger,
Numerous as wolves, and stronger,
On they sweep. Oh, glorious city!
Must thou be a theme for pity?
Fight, like your first sire, each Roman!
Alaric was a gentle foeman,
Match'd with Bourbon's black banditti!
Rouse thee, thou eternal city;
Rouse thee! Rather give the torch
With thy own hand to thy porch,
Than behold such hosts pollute
Your worst dwelling with their foot.

6

Ah! behold yon bleeding spectre!
Ilion's children find no Hector;
Priam's offspring loved their brother;
Rome's great sire forgot his mother,
When he slew his gallant twin,
With inexpiable sin.
See the giant shadow stride
O'er the ramparts high and wide!
When the first o'erleapt thy wall,
Its foundation mourn'd thy fall.
Now, though towering like a Babel,
Who to stop his steps are able?
Stalking o'er thy highest dome,
Remus claims his vengeance, Rome!

7

Now they reach thee in their anger:
Fire and smoke and hellish clangour
Are around thee, thou world's wonder!
Death is in thy walls and under.
Now the meeting steel first clashes,
Downward then the ladder crashes,
With its iron load all gleaming,
Lying at its foot blaspheming!
Up again! for every warrior
Slain, another climbs the barrier.
Thicker grows the strife: thy ditches
Europe's mingling gore enriches.
Rome! although thy wall may perish,
Such manure thy fields will cherish,
Making gay the harvest-home;
But thy hearths, alas! oh, Rome! —
Yet be Rome amidst thine anguish,
Fight as thou wast wont to vanquish.

8

Yet once more, ye old Penates!
Let not your quench'd hearths be Até's!
Yet again, ye shadowy heroes,
Yield not to these stranger Neros!
Though the son who slew his mother
Shed Rome's blood, he was your brother:
'T was the Roman curb'd the Roman; —
Brennus was a baffled foeman.
Yet again, ye saints and martyrs,
Rise! for yours are holier charters!
Mighty gods of temples falling,
Yet in ruin still appalling!
Mightier founders of those altars,
True and Christian, — strike the assaulters!
Tiber! Tiber! let thy torrent
Show even nature's self abhorrent.
Let each breathing heart dilated
Turn, as doth the lion baited!
Rome be crush'd to one wide tomb,
But be still the Roman's Rome!

Bourbon, Arnold, Cæsar, *and others arrive at the foot of the wall.* Arnold *is about to plant his ladder.*

Bourb. Hold, Arnold! I am first.
Arn. Not so, my lord.
Bourb. Hold, sir, I charge you! Follow! I am proud
Of such a follower, but will brook no leader.
[Bourbon *plants his ladder, and begins to mount.*
Now, boys! On! on!
[*A shot strikes him, and* Bourbon *falls.*
Cæs. And off!
Arn. Eternal powers!
The host will be appall'd, — but vengeance! vengeance!
Bourb. 'T is nothing — lend me your hand.
[Bourbon *takes* Arnold *by the hand, and rises; but as he puts his foot on the step, falls again.*
Arnold! I am sped.
Conceal my fall — all will go well — conceal it!
Fling my cloak o'er what will be dust anon;
Let not the soldiers see it.
Arn. You must be
Removed; the aid of —
Bourb. No, my gallant boy;
Death is upon me. But what is *one* life?
The Bourbon's spirit shall command them still.
Keep them yet ignorant that I am but clay,
Till they are conquerors — then do as you may.
Cæs. Would not your highness choose to kiss the cross?
We have no priest here, but the hilt of sword
May serve instead: it did the same for Bayard.

Bourb. Thou bitter slave! to name *him* at this time!
But I deserve it.
Arn. (*to* CÆSAR). Villain, hold your peace!
Cæs. What, when a Christian dies? Shall I not offer
A Christian 'Vade in pace'?
Arn. Silence! Oh!
Those eyes are glazing which o'erlook'd the world,
And saw no equal.
Bourb. Arnold, shouldst thou see
France — But hark! hark! the assault grows warmer — Oh!
For but an hour, a minute more of life
To die within the wall! Hence, Arnold, hence!
You lose time — they will conquer Rome without thee.
Arn. And without *thee!*
Bourb. Not so; I'll lead them still
In spirit. Cover up my dust, and breathe not
That I have ceased to breathe. Away! and be
Victorious!
Arn. But I must not leave thee thus.
Bourb. You must — farewell — Up! up! the world is winning. [BOURBON *dies.*
Cæs. (*to* ARNOLD). Come, count, to business.
Arn. True. I'll weep hereafter.

[ARNOLD *covers* BOURBON'S *body with a mantle, and mounts the ladder, crying*

The Bourbon! Bourbon! On, boys! Rome is ours!
Cæs. Good night, lord constable! thou wert a man.

[CÆSAR *follows* ARNOLD; *they reach the battlement;* ARNOLD *and* CÆSAR *are struck down.*

Cæs. A precious somerset! Is your countship injured?
Arn. No. [*Remounts the ladder.*
Cæs. A rare blood-hound, when his own is heated!
And 'tis no boy's play. Now he strikes them down!
His hand is on the battlement — he grasps it
As though it were an altar; now his foot
Is on it, and — What have we here? — a Roman? [*A man falls.*
The first bird of the covey! he has fallen
On the outside of the nest. Why, how now, fellow?
Wounded Man. A drop of water!
Cæs. Blood's the only liquid
Nearer than Tiber.
Wounded Man. I have died for Rome. [*Dies.*
Cæs. And so did Bourbon, in another sense.
Oh these immortal men! and their great motives!
But I must after my young charge. He is
By this time i' the forum. Charge! charge!

[CÆSAR *mounts the ladder; the scene closes.*

SCENE II

The City. — Combats between the Besiegers and Besieged in the streets. Inhabitants flying in confusion.

Enter CÆSAR.

Cæs. I cannot find my hero; he is mix'd
With the heroic crowd that now pursue
The fugitives, or battle with the desperate.
What have we here? A cardinal or two
That do not seem in love with martyrdom.
How the old red-shanks scamper! Could they doff
Their hose as they have doff'd their hats, 't would be
A blessing, as a mark the less for plunder.
But let them fly; the crimson kennels now
Will not much stain their stockings, since the mire
Is of the self-same purple hue.

Enter a party fighting — ARNOLD *at the head of the Besiegers.*

He comes,
Hand in hand with the mild twins — Gore and Glory.
Holla! hold, count!
Arn. Away! they must not rally.
Cæs. I tell thee, be not rash; a golden bridge
Is for a flying enemy. I gave thee
A form of beauty, and an
Exemption from some maladies of body,
But not of mind, which is not mine to give.
But though I gave the form of Thetis' son,
I dipt thee not in Styx; and 'gainst a foe
I would not warrant thy chivalric heart
More than Pelides' heel; why then, be cautious,
And know thyself a mortal still.
Arn. And who
With aught of soul would combat if he were

Invulnerable? That were pretty sport.
Think'st thou I beat for hares when lions roar? [ARNOLD *rushes into the combat.*
Cæs. A precious sample of humanity!
Well, his blood 's up; and if a little 's shed,
'T will serve to curb his fever.

[ARNOLD *engages with a Roman, who retires towards a portico.*

Arn. Yield thee, slave!
I promise quarter.
Rom. That 's soon said.
Arn. And done —
My word is known.
Rom. So shall be my deeds.
[*They re-engage.* CÆSAR *comes forward.*
Cæs. Why, Arnold! hold thine own: thou hast in hand
A famous artisan, a cunning sculptor;
Also a dealer in the sword and dagger.
Not so, my musqueteer; 't was he who slew
The Bourbon from the wall.
Arn. Ay, did he so?
Then he hath carved his monument.
Rom. I yet
May live to carve your betters'.
Cæs. Well said, my man of marble! Benvenuto,
Thou hast some practice in both ways; and he
Who slays Cellini will have work'd as hard
As e'er thou didst upon Carrara's blocks.

[ARNOLD *disarms and wounds* CELLINI, *but slightly: the latter draws a pistol, and fires; then retires, and disappears through the portico.*

Cæs. How farest thou? Thou hast a taste, methinks,
Of red Bellona's banquet.
Arn. (*staggers*). 'T is a scratch.
Lend me thy scarf. He shall not 'scape me thus.
Cæs. Where is it?
Arn. In the shoulder, not the sword arm —
And that 's enough. I am thirsty: would I had
A helm of water!
Cæs. That 's a liquid now
In requisition, but by no means easiest
To come at.
Arn. And my thirst increases — but
I 'll find a way to quench it.
Cæs. Or be quench'd
Thyself?
Arn. The chance is even; we will throw
The dice thereon. But I lose time in prating;
Prithee be quick. [CÆSAR *binds on the scarf.*
And what dost thou so idly?
Why dost not strike?
Cæs. Your old philosophers
Beheld mankind, as mere spectators of
The Olympic games. When I behold a prize
Worth wrestling for, I may be found a Milo.
Arn. Ay, 'gainst an oak.
Cæs. A forest, when it suits me;
I combat with a mass, or not at all.
Meantime, pursue thy sport as I do mine;
Which is just now to gaze, since all these labourers
Will reap my harvest gratis.
Arn. Thou art still
A fiend!
Cæs. And thou — a man.
Arn. Why, such I fain would show me.
Cæs. True — as men are.
Arn. And what is that?
Cæs. Thou feelest and thou seest.

[*Exit* ARNOLD, *joining in the combat which still continues between detached parties. The scene closes.*

SCENE III

St. Peter's — The Interior of the Church — The Pope at the Altar — Priests, etc. crowding in confusion, and Citizens flying for refuge, pursued by Soldiery.

Enter CÆSAR.

A Spanish Soldier. Down with them, comrades! sieze upon those lamps!
Cleave yon bald-pated shaveling to the chine!
His rosary 's of gold!
Lutheran Soldier. Revenge! revenge!
Plunder hereafter, but for vengeance now —
Yonder stands Anti-Christ!
Cæs. (*interposing*). How now, schismatic?
What wouldst thou?
Luth. Sold. In the holy name of Christ,
Destroy proud Anti-Christ. I am a Christian.
Cæs. Yea, a disciple that would make the founder
Of your belief renounce it, could he see
Such proselytes. But stint thyself to plunder.
Luth. Sold. I say he is the devil.
Cæs. Hush! keep that secret,
Lest he should recognise you for his own.

Luth. Sold. Why would you save him? I repeat he is
The devil, or the devil's vicar upon earth.
Cæs. And that 's the reason: would you make a quarrel
With your best friends? You had far best be quiet;
His hour is not yet come.
Luth. Sold. That shall be seen.

[*The Lutheran Soldier rushes forward; a shot strikes him from one of the Pope's Guards, and he falls at the foot of the Altar.*

Cæs. (*to the Lutheran*). I told you so.
Luth. Sold. And will you not avenge me?
Cæs. Not I! You know that 'Vengeance is the Lord's:'
You see he loves no interlopers.
Luth. Sold. Oh!
Had I but slain him, I had gone on high,
Crown'd with eternal glory! Heaven, forgive
My feebleness of arm that reach'd him not,
And take thy servant to thy mercy. 'T is
A glorious triumph still; proud Babylon 's
No more; the Harlot of the Seven Hills
Hath changed her scarlet raiment for sackcloth
And ashes! [*The Lutheran dies.*
Cæs. Yes, thine own amidst the rest.
Well done, old Babel!

[*The Guards defend themselves desperately, while the Pontiff escapes, by a private passage, to the Vatican and the Castle of Saint Angelo.*

Cæs. Ha! right nobly battled!
Now, priest! now, soldier! the two great professions,
Together by the ears and hearts! I have not
Seen a more comic pantomime since Titus
Took Jewry; but the Romans had the best then;
Now they must take their turn.
Soldiers. He hath escaped!
Follow!
Another Sold. They have barr'd the narrow passage up,
And it is clogg'd with dead even to the door.
Cæs. I am glad he hath escaped: he may thank me for 't
In part. I would not have his bulls abolish'd —
'T were worth one half our empire: his indulgences
Demand some in return; — no, no, he must not
Fall; — and besides, his now escape may furnish
A future miracle, in future proof
Of his infallibility. [*To the Spanish Soldiery.*
Well, cut-throats!
What do you pause for? If you make not haste,
There will not be a link of pious gold left.
And *you*, too, catholics! Would ye return
From such a pilgrimage without a relic?
The very Lutherans have more true devotion:
See how they strip the shrines!
Soldiers. By holy Peter!
He speaks the truth; the heretics will bear
The best away.
Cæs. And that were shame! Go to!
Assist in their conversion.

[*The Soldiers disperse; many quit the Church, others enter.*

Cæs. They are gone,
And others come: so flows the wave on wave
Of what these creatures call eternity,
Deeming themselves the breakers of the ocean,
While they are but its bubbles, ignorant
That foam is their foundation. So, another!

Enter Olimpia, *flying from the pursuit. She springs upon the Altar.*

Sold. She 's mine!
Another Sold. (*opposing the former*). You lie, I track'd her first; and were she
The Pope's niece, I 'll not yield her. [*They fight.*
3d Sold. (*advancing toward* Olimpia). You may settle
Your claims; I 'll make mine good.
Olimp. Infernal slave!
You touch me not alive.
3d Sold. Alive or dead!
Olimp. (*embracing a massive crucifix*). Respect your God!
3d Sold. Yes, when he shines in gold.
Girl, you but grasp your dowry.

[*As he advances,* Olimpia, *with a strong and sudden effort, casts down the crucifix: it strikes the Soldier, who falls.*

3d Sold. Oh, great God!
Olimp. Ah, now you recognise him!
3d Sold. My brain 's crush'd!
Comrades, help, ho! All 's darkness! [*He dies.*

Other Soldiers (*coming up*). Slay her, although she had a thousand lives :
She hath kill'd our comrade.
Olimp. Welcome such a death !
You have no life to give, which the worst slave
Would take. Great God ! through thy redeeming Son,
And thy Son's Mother, now receive me as
I would approach thee, worthy her, and him,
And thee !

Enter Arnold.

Arn. What do I see ? Accursèd jackals!
Forbear !
Cæs. (*aside and laughing*). Ha ! ha ! here 's equity ! The dogs
Have as much right as he. But to the issue!
Soldiers. Count, she hath slain our comrade.
Arn. With what weapon ?
Sold. The cross, beneath which he is crush'd ; behold him
Lie there, more like a worm than man ; she cast it
Upon his head.
Arn. Even so; there is a woman
Worthy a brave man's liking. Were ye such,
Ye would have honour'd her. But get ye hence,
And thank your meanness, other God you have none,
For your existence. Had you touch'd a hair
Of those dishevell'd locks, I would have thinn'd
Your ranks more than the enemy. Away !
Ye jackals ! gnaw the bones the lion leaves,
But not even these till he permits.
A Sold. (*murmuring*). The lion
Might conquer for himself then.
Arn. (*cuts him down*). Mutineer !
Rebel in hell — you shall obey on earth !
[*The Soldiers assault* Arnold.
Arn. Come on ! I 'm glad on 't ! I will show you, slaves,
How you should be commanded, and who led you
First o'er the wall you were so shy to scale,
Until I waved my banners from its height,
As you are bold within it.

[Arnold *mows down the foremost ; the rest throw down their arms.*

Soldiers. Mercy ! mercy !
Arn. Then learn to grant it ! Have I taught you *who*
Led you o'er Rome's eternal battlements ?
Soldiers. We saw it, and we know it; yet forgive
A moment's error in the heat of conquest —
The conquest which you led to.
Arn. Get you hence !
Hence to your quarters ! you will find them fix'd
In the Colonna palace.
Olimp. (*aside*). In my father's
House !
Arn. (*to the Soldiers*). Leave your arms; ye have no further need
Of such: the city 's render'd. And mark well
You keep your hands clean, or I 'll find out a stream
As red as Tiber now runs, for your baptism.
Soldiers (*deposing their arms and departing*). We obey !
Arn. (*to* Olimpia). Lady, you are safe.
Olimp. I should be so,
Had I a knife even; but it matters not —
Death hath a thousand gates; and on the marble,
Even at the altar foot, whence I look down
Upon destruction, shall my head be dash'd,
Ere thou ascend it. God forgive thee, man !
Arn. I wish to merit his forgiveness, and
Thine own, although I have not injured thee.
Olimp. No ! Thou hast only sack'd my native land, —
No injury ! — and made my father's house
A den of thieves ! No injury ! — this temple —
Slippery with Roman and with holy gore !
No injury ! And now thou wouldst preserve me,
To be — but that shall never be !

[*She raises her eyes to Heaven, folds her robe round her, and prepares to dash herself down on the side of the Altar opposite to that where* Arnold *stands.*

Arn. Hold! hold !
I swear.
Olimp. Spare thine already forfeit soul
A perjury for which even hell would loathe thee.
I know thee.
Arn. No, thou know'st me not; I am not
Of these men, though —
Olimp. I judge thee by thy mates ;
It is for God to judge thee as thou art.
I see thee purple with the blood of Rome;

Take mine, 'tis all thou e'er shalt have of me,
And here, upon the marble of this temple,
Where the baptismal font baptized me God's,
I offer him a blood less holy
But not less pure (pure as it left me then,
A redeem'd infant) than the holy water
The saints have sanctified!

[OLIMPIA *waves her hand to* ARNOLD *with disdain, and dashes herself on the pavement from the Altar.*

Arn. Eternal God!
I feel thee now! Help! help! She's gone.
Cæs. (*approaches*). I am here.
Arn. Thou! but, oh, save her!
Cæs. (*assisting him to raise* OLIMPIA). She hath done it well!
The leap was serious.
Arn. Oh, she is lifeless!
Cæs. If
She be so, I have nought to do with that;
The resurrection is beyond me.
Arn. Slave!
Cæs. Ay, slave or master, 't is all one: methinks
Good words, however, are as well at times.
Arn. Words! — Canst thou aid her?
Cæs. I will try. A sprinkling
Of that same holy water may be useful.

[*He brings some in his helmet from the font.*

Arn. 'T is mix'd with blood.
Cæs. There is no cleaner now
In Rome.
Arn. How pale! how beautiful! how lifeless!
Alive or dead, thou essence of all beauty,
I love but thee!
Cæs. Even so Achilles loved
Penthesilea: with his form it seems
You have his heart, and yet it was no soft one.
Arn. She breathes! But no, 't was nothing, or the last
Faint flutter life disputes with death.
Cæs. She breathes.
Arn. *Thou* say'st it? Then 't is truth.
Cæs. You do me right —
The devil speaks truth much oftener than he's deem'd:
He hath an ignorant audience.
Arn. (*without attending to him*). Yes! her heart beats.
Alas! that the first beat of the only heart
I ever wish'd to beat with mine should vibrate
To an assassin's pulse.
Cæs. A sage reflection,
But somewhat late i' the day. Where shall we bear her?
I say she lives.
Arn. And will she live?
Cæs. As much
As dust can.
Arn. Then she is dead!
Cæs. Bah! bah! You are so,
And do not know it. She will come to life —
Such as you think so, such as you now are;
But we must work by human means.
Arn. We will
Convey her unto the Colonna palace,
Where I have pitch'd my banner.
Cæs. Come then! raise her up!
Arn. Softly!
Cæs. As softly as they bear the dead,
Perhaps because they cannot feel the jolting.
Arn. But doth she live indeed?
Cæs. Nay, never fear!
But, if you rue it after, blame not me.
Arn. Let her but live!
Cæs. The spirit of her life
Is yet within her breast, and may revive.
Count! count! I am your servant in all things,
And this is a new office: — 't is not oft
I am employ'd in such; but you perceive
How stanch a friend is what you call a fiend.
On earth you have often only fiends for friends;
Now *I* desert not mine. Soft! bear her hence,
The beautiful half-clay, and nearly spirit!
I am almost enamour'd of her, as
Of old the angels of her earliest sex.
Arn. Thou!
Cæs. I! But fear not. I'll not be your rival!
Arn. Rival!
Cæs. I could be one right formidable;
But since I slew the seven husbands of
Tobias' future bride (and after all
Was smoked out by some incense), I have laid
Aside intrigue: 't is rarely worth the trouble
Of gaining, or — what is more difficult —
Getting rid of your prize again: for there's
The rub! at least to mortals.
Arn. Prithee, peace!
Softly! methinks her lips move, her eyes open!
Cæs. Like stars, no doubt; for that's a metaphor

For Lucifer and Venus.
Arn. To the palace
Colonna, as I told you!
Cæs. Oh! I know
My way through Rome.
Arn. Now onward, onward! Gently!
[*Exeunt, bearing* OLIMPIA. *The scene closes.*

PART III

SCENE I

A Castle in the Apennines, surrounded by a wild but smiling country. Chorus of Peasants singing before the Gates.

CHORUS

1

The wars are over,
The spring is come;
The bride and her lover
Have sought their home:
They are happy, we rejoice;
Let their hearts have an echo in every voice!

2

The spring is come; the violet 's gone,
The first-born child of the early sun:
With us she is but a winter's flower,
The snow on the hills cannot blast her bower,
And she lifts up her dewy eye of blue
To the youngest sky of the self-same hue.

3

And when the spring comes with her host
Of flowers, that flower beloved the most
Shrinks from the crowd that may confuse
Her heavenly odour and virgin hues.

4

Pluck the others, but still remember
Their herald out of dim December —
The morning star of all the flowers,
The pledge of daylight's lengthen'd hours;
Nor, midst the roses, e'er forget
The virgin, virgin violet.

Enter CÆSAR.

Cæs. (*singing*). The wars are all over,
Our swords are all idle,
The steed bites the bridle,
The casque 's on the wall.
There 's rest for the rover;
But his armour is rusty,
And the veteran grows crusty,
As he yawns in the hall.
He drinks — but what 's drinking?
A mere pause from thinking!
No bugle awakes him with life-and-death call.

CHORUS

But the hound bayeth loudly,
The boar 's in the wood,
And the falcon longs proudly
To spring from her hood:
On the wrist of the noble
She sits like a crest,
And the air is in trouble
With birds from their nest.

Cæs. Oh! shadow of glory!
Dim image of war!
But the chase hath no story,
Her hero no star,
Since Nimrod, the founder
Of empire and chase,
Who made the woods wonder
And quake for their race.
When the lion was young,
In the pride of his might,
Then 't was sport for the strong
To embrace him in fight;
To go forth, with a pine
For a spear, 'gainst the mammoth,
Or strike through the ravine
At the foaming behemoth;
While man was in stature
As towers in our time,
The first-born of Nature,
And, like her, sublime!

CHORUS

But the wars are over,
The spring is come;
The bride and her lover
Have sought their home:
They are happy, and we rejoice;
Let their hearts have an echo from every voice! [*Exeunt the Peasantry, singing.*

[FRAGMENT of the third part of *The Deformed Transformed.* First published in the edition of 1901.]

CHORUS

When the merry bells are ringing,
And the peasant girls are singing,
And the early flowers are flinging
Their odours in the air;

And the honey bee is clinging
To the buds; and birds are winging
Their way, pair by pair:
Then the earth looks free from trouble
With the brightness of a bubble;
Though I did not make it,
I could breathe on and break it;
But too much I scorn it,
Or else I would mourn it,
To see despots and slaves
Playing o'er their own graves.

Enter Count Arnold.

Mem. Jealous — Arnold of Cæsar. Olympia at first not liking Cæsar — then? — Arnold jealous of himself under his former figure, owing to the power of intellect, etc., etc., etc.

Arnold. You are merry, Sir — what? singing too?
Cæsar. It is
The land of Song — and Canticles you know
Were once my avocation.
Arn. Nothing moves you;
You scoff even at your own calamity —
And such calamity! how wert thou fallen
Son of the Morning! and yet Lucifer
Can smile.
Cæs. His shape can — would you have me weep,
In the fair form I wear, to please you?
Arn. Ah!
Cæs. You are grave — what have you on your spirit!
Arn. Nothing.
Cæs. How mortals lie by instinct! If you ask
A disappointed courtier — What 's the matter?
'Nothing' — an outshone Beauty what has made
Her smooth brow crisp — 'Oh, nothing!' — a young heir
When his Sire has recover'd from the Gout,
What ails him? 'Nothing!' or a Monarch who
Has heard the truth, and looks imperial on it —
What clouds his royal aspect? 'Nothing,' 'Nothing!'
Nothing — eternal nothing — of these nothings
All are a lie — for all to them are much!
And they themselves alone the real 'Nothings.'
Your present Nothing, too, is something to you —
What is it?
Arn. Know you not?
Cæs. I only know
What I desire to know! and will not waste
Omniscience upon phantoms. Out with it!
If you seek aid from me — or else be silent,
And eat your thoughts — till they breed snakes within you.
Arn. Olimpia!
Cæs. I thought as much — go on.
Arn. I thought she had loved me.
Cæs. Blessings on your Creed!
What a good Christian you were found to be!
But what cold Sceptic hath appall'd your faith
And transubstantiated to crumbs again
The *body* of your Credence?
Arn. No one — but —
Each day — each hour — each minute shows me more
And more she loves me not —
Cæs. Doth she rebel?
Arn. No, she is calm, and meek, and silent with me,
And coldly dutiful, and proudly patient —
Endures my Love — not meets it.
Cæs. That seems strange.
You are beautiful and brave! the first is much
For passion — and the rest for Vanity.
Arn. I saved her life, too; and her Father's life,
And Father's house from ashes.
Cæs. These are nothing.
You seek for Gratitude — the Philosopher's stone.
Arn. And find it not.
Cæs. You cannot find what is not.
But *found* would it content you? would you owe
To thankfulness what you desire from Passion?
No! No! you would be *loved* — what you call loved —
Self-loved — loved for *yourself* — for neither health,
Nor wealth, nor youth, nor power, nor rank, nor beauty —

For these you may be stript of — but beloved
As an abstraction — for — you know not what!
These are the wishes of a moderate lover —
And *so* you love.
Arn. Ah! could I be beloved,
Would I ask wherefore?
Cæs. Yes! and not believe
The answer — You are jealous.
Arn. And of whom?
Cæs. It may be of yourself, for Jealousy
Is as a shadow of the Sun. The Orb
Is mighty — as you mortals deem — and to
Your little Universe seems universal;
But, great as He appears, and is to you,
The smallest cloud — the slightest vapour of
Your humid earth enables you to look
Upon a Sky which you revile as dull,
Though your eyes dare not gaze on it when cloudless.
Nothing can blind a mortal like to light.
Now Love in you is as the Sun — a thing
Beyond you — and your Jealousy 's of Earth —
A cloud of your own raising.
Arn. Not so always!
There is a cause at times.
Cæs. Oh, yes! when atoms jostle,
The System is in peril. But I speak
Of things you know not. Well, to earth again!
This precious thing of dust — this bright Olimpia —
This marvellous Virgin, is a marble maid —
An Idol, but a cold one to your heat
Promethean, and unkindled by your torch.
Arn. Slave!
Cæs. In the victor's Chariot, when Rome triumph'd,
There was a Slave of yore to tell him truth!
You are a Conqueror — command your Slave.
Arn. Teach me the way to win the woman's love.
Cæs. Leave her.
Arn. Were that the path — I 'd not pursue it.
Cæs. No doubt! for if you did, the remedy
Would be for a disease already cured.
Arn. All wretched as I am, I would not quit
My unrequited love, for all that 's happy.
Cæs. You have possess'd the woman — still possess.
What need you more?
Arn. To be myself possess'd —
To be her heart as she is mine.

DON JUAN

[The composition of *Don Juan* began in the autumn of 1818 and extended, with intermissions, until a few months before Byron's death. The fragment of the seventeenth Canto, which is here reproduced from the new Murray edition, was actually carried with him to Greece. The dates of composition and publication are as follows: Canto I. was written in September, 1818; Canto II. in December, 1818, and January, 1819; Cantos I. and II. were published July 15, 1819; Cantos III. and IV. were written in the following winter; Canto V. in October and November of 1820; Cantos III., IV., and V. were published August 8, 1821; Cantos VI. to XVI. were written between June, 1822, and March, 1823; Cantos VI., VII., VIII. were published July 15, 1823; Cantos IX., X., XI., August 29, 1823; Cantos XII., XIII., XIV., December 17, 1823; Cantos XV., XVI., March 26, 1824. The first five cantos were issued by Murray without name of either author or publisher — and wisely, for the storm of obloquy roused by their mingled voluptuousness and scepticism was tremendous. Naturally the authorship was an open secret, for who but Byron could have written them? The remaining cantos were prudently declined by Mr. Murray, and were finally brought out by John Hunt. — Byron shows no particular knowledge of the *Don Juan* story as treated by earlier poets, and the subject was manifestly a mere pretext in his hands for writing indiscriminately on whatever came into his mind. He speaks somewhere as intending to follow the regular epic tradition, with a picture of hell and the like; but it is hard to see how any miraculous conclusion could have been tacked on to the plot as it was progressing in the sixteenth and seventeenth cantos. Were this the proper place for such a discussion, it might be argued that *Don Juan*, in its actual form, was the only epic manner left for a poet of the nineteenth century to adopt with power of conviction. In one sense *Don Juan* is a satire, to many critics the greatest satire ever written; but it is something still more than that. It is the epic of modern life.]

Difficile est proprie communia dicere. — Hor.

'Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale? — Yes, by Saint Anne, and ginger shall be hot i' the mouth, too!' — Shakspeare, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will.*

FRAGMENT

On the back of the Poet's MS. of Canto I

I would to heaven that I were so much clay,
As I am blood, bone, marrow, passion, feeling —
Because at least the past were pass'd away —
And for the future — (but I write this reeling,
Having got drunk exceedingly to-day,
So that I seem to stand upon the ceiling)
I say — the future is a serious matter —
And so — for God's sake — hock and soda-water!

DEDICATION

I

Bob Southey! You 're a poet — Poet-laureate,
And representative of all the race,
Although 't is true that you turn'd out a Tory at
Last, — yours has lately been a common case;
And now, my Epic Renegade! what are ye at?
With all the Lakers, in and out of place?
A nest of tuneful persons, to my eye
Like 'four and twenty Blackbirds in a pye;'

II

'Which pye being open'd they began to sing'
(This old song and new simile holds good),
'A dainty dish to set before the King,'
Or Regent, who admires such kind of food; —
And Coleridge, too, has lately taken wing,
But like a hawk encumber'd with his hood, —
Explaining metaphysics to the nation —
I wish he would explain his Explanation.

III

You, Bob! are rather insolent, you know,
At being disappointed in your wish
To supersede all warblers here below,
And be the only Blackbird in the dish;
And then you overstrain yourself, or so,
And tumble downward like the flying fish
Gasping on deck, because you soar too high, Bob,
And fall, for lack of moisture, quite a-dry, Bob!

IV

And Wordsworth, in a rather long *Excursion*
(I think the quarto holds five hundred pages),
Has given a sample from the vasty version
Of his new system to perplex the sages;
'T is poetry — at least by his assertion,
And may appear so when the dog-star rages —
And he who understands it would be able
To add a story to the Tower of Babel.

V

You — Gentlemen! by dint of long seclusion
From better company, have kept your own
At Keswick, and, through still continued fusion
Of one another's minds, at last have grown
To deem as a most logical conclusion,
That Poesy has wreaths for you alone:
There is a narrowness in such a notion,
Which makes me wish you 'd change your lakes for ocean.

VI

I would not imitate the petty thought,
Nor coin my self-love to so base a vice,
For all the glory your conversion brought,
Since gold alone should not have been its price.
You have your salary; was 't for that you wrought?
And Wordsworth has his place in the Excise.
You 're shabby fellows — true — but poets still,
And duly seated on the immortal hill.

VII

Your bays may hide the baldness of your brows —
Perhaps some virtuous blushes; — let them go —
To you I envy neither fruit nor boughs —
And for the fame you would engross below,

The field is universal, and allows
Scope to all such as feel the inherent glow:
Scott, Rogers, Campbell, Moore, and Crabbe will try
'Gainst you the question with posterity.

VIII

For me, who, wandering with pedestrian Muses,
Contend not with you on the wingèd steed,
I wish your fate may yield ye, when she chooses,
The fame you envy and the skill you need;
And recollect a poet nothing loses
In giving to his brethren their full meed
Of merit, and complaint of present days
Is not the certain path to future praise.

IX

He that reserves his laurels for posterity
(Who does not often claim the bright reversion)
Has generally no great crop to spare it, he
Being only injured by his own assertion;
And although here and there some glorious rarity
Arise like Titan from the sea's immersion,
The major part of such appellants go
To — God knows where — for no one else can know.

X

If, fallen in evil days on evil tongues,
Milton appeal'd to the Avenger, Time,
If Time, the Avenger, execrates his wrongs,
And makes the word 'Miltonic' mean '*sublime*,'
He deign'd not to belie his soul in songs,
Nor turn his very talent to a crime;
He did not loathe the Sire to laud the Son,
But closed the tyrant-hater he begun.

XI

Think'st thou, could he — the blind Old Man — arise
Like Samuel from the grave, to freeze once more
The blood of monarchs with his prophecies,
Or be alive again — again all hoar
With time and trials, and those helpless eyes,
And heartless daughters — worn — and pale — and poor;
Would *he* adore a sultan? *he* obey
The intellectual eunuch Castlereagh?

XII

Cold-blooded, smooth-faced, placid miscreant!
Dabbling its sleek young hands in Erin's gore,
And thus for wider carnage taught to pant,
Transferr'd to gorge upon a sister shore,
The vulgarest tool that Tyranny could want,
With just enough of talent, and no more,
To lengthen fetters by another fix'd,
And offer poison long already mix'd.

XIII

An orator of such set trash of phrase
Ineffably — legitimately vile,
That even its grossest flatterers dare not praise,
Nor foes — all nations — condescend to smile, —
Not even a sprightly blunder's spark can blaze
From that Ixion grindstone's ceaseless toil,
That turns and turns to give the world a notion
Of endless torments and perpetual motion.

XIV

A bungler even in its disgusting trade,
And botching, patching, leaving still behind
Something of which its masters are afraid,
States to be curb'd and thoughts to be confined,
Conspiracy or Congress to be made —
Cobbling at manacles for all mankind —
A tinkering slave-maker, who mends old chains,
With God and man's abhorrence for its gains.

XV

If we may judge of matter by the mind,
Emasculated to the marrow *It*
Hath but two objects, how to serve and bind,
Deeming the chain it wears even men may fit,

Eutropius of its many masters, — blind
To worth as freedom, wisdom as to wit,
Fearless — because *no* feeling dwells in ice,
Its very courage stagnates to a vice.

XVI

Where shall I turn me not to *view* its bonds,
For I will never *feel* them? — Italy!
Thy late reviving Roman soul desponds
Beneath the lie this State-thing breathed o'er thee —
Thy clanking chain, and Erin's yet green wounds,
Have voices, tongues to cry aloud for me.
Europe has slaves, allies, kings, armies still,
And Southey lives to sing them very ill.

XVIII

Meantime, Sir Laureate, I proceed to dedicate,
In honest simple verse, this song to you.
And, if in flattering strains I do not predicate,
'T is that I still retain my 'buff and blue;'
My politics as yet are all to educate:
Apostasy 's so fashionable, too,
To keep *one* creed 's a task grown quite Herculean;
Is it not so, my Tory, ultra-Julian?

VENICE, *September* 16, 1818.

CANTO THE FIRST

I

I WANT a hero: an uncommon want,
When every year and month sends forth a new one,
Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,
The age discovers he is not the true one;
Of such as these I should not care to vaunt,
I 'll therefore take our ancient friend Don Juan —
We all have seen him, in the pantomime,
Sent to the devil somewhat ere his time.

II

Vernon, the butcher Cumberland, Wolfe, Hawke,
Prince Ferdinand, Granby, Burgoyne, Keppel, Howe,
Evil and good, have had their tithe of talk,
And fill'd their sign posts then, like Wellesley now;
Each in their turn like Banquo's monarchs stalk,
Followers of fame, 'nine farrow' of that sow:
France, too, had Buonaparté and Dumourier
Recorded in the Moniteur and Courier.

III

Barnave, Brissot, Condorcet, Mirabeau,
Petion, Clootz, Danton, Marat, La Fayette,
Were French, and famous people, as we know:
And there were others, scarce forgotten yet,
Joubert, Hoche, Marceau, Lannes, Desaix, Moreau,
With many of the military set,
Exceedingly remarkable at times,
But not at all adapted to my rhymes.

IV

Nelson was once Britannia's god of war,
And still should be so, but the tide is turn'd;
There 's no more to be said of Trafalgar
'T is with our hero quietly inurn'd;
Because the army 's grown more popular,
At which the naval people are concern'd;
Besides, the prince is all for the land-service,
Forgetting Duncan, Nelson, Howe, and Jervis.

V

Brave men were living before Agamemnon
And since, exceeding valorous and sage,
A good deal like him too, though quite the same none;
But then they shone not on the poet's page,
And so have been forgotten: — I condemn none,
But can 't find any in the present age
Fit for my poem (that is, for my new one);
So, as I said, I 'll take my friend Don Juan.

VI

Most epic poets plunge 'in medias res'
(Horace makes this the heroic turnpike road),
And then your hero tells, whene'er you please,
What went before — by way of episode,

While seated after dinner at his ease,
Beside his mistress in some soft abode,
Palace, or garden, paradise, or cavern,
Which serves the happy couple for a tavern.

VII

That is the usual method, but not mine —
My way is to begin with the beginning;
The regularity of my design
Forbids all wandering as the worst of sinning,
And therefore I shall open with a line
(Although it cost me half an hour in spinning)
Narrating somewhat of Don Juan's father,
And also of his mother, if you 'd rather.

VIII

In Seville was he born, a pleasant city,
Famous for oranges and women — he
Who has not seen it will be much to pity,
So says the proverb — and I quite agree;
Of all the Spanish towns is none more pretty,
Cadiz perhaps — but that you soon may see;
Don Juan's parents lived beside the river,
A noble stream, and call'd the Guadalquivir.

IX

His father's name was José — *Don*, of course, —
A true Hidalgo, free from every stain
Of Moor or Hebrew blood, he traced his source
Through the most Gothic gentlemen of Spain;
A better cavalier ne'er mounted horse,
Or, being mounted, e'er got down again,
Than José, who begot our hero, who
Begot — but that 's to come — Well, to renew:

X

His mother was a learned lady, famed
For every branch of every science known
In every Christian language ever named,
With virtues equall'd by her wit alone,
She made the cleverest people quite ashamed,
And even the good with inward envy groan,
Finding themselves so very much exceeded
In their own way by all the things that she did.

XI

Her memory was a mine: she knew by heart
All Calderon and greater part of Lopé,
So that if any actor miss'd his part
She could have served him for the prompter's copy;
For her Feinagle's were an useless art,
And he himself obliged to shut up shop — he
Could never make a memory so fine as
That which adorn'd the brain of Donna Inez.

XII

Her favourite science was the mathematical,
Her noblest virtue was her magnanimity,
Her wit (she sometimes tried at wit) was Attic all,
Her serious sayings darken'd to sublimity;
In short, in all things she was fairly what I call
A prodigy — her morning dress was dimity,
Her evening silk, or, in the summer, muslin,
And other stuffs, with which I won't stay puzzling.

XIII

She knew the Latin — that is, 'the Lord's prayer,'
And Greek — the alphabet — I 'm nearly sure;
She read some French romances here and there,
Although her mode of speaking was not pure;
For native Spanish she had no great care,
At least her conversation was obscure;
Her thoughts were theorems, her words a problem,
As if she deem'd that mystery would ennoble 'em.

XIV

She liked the English and the Hebrew tongue,
And said there was analogy between 'em;
She proved it somehow out of sacred song,
But I must leave the proofs to those who 've seen 'em;
But this I heard her say, and can't be wrong,
And all may think which way their judgments lean 'em,

'’T is strange — the Hebrew noun which means "I am,"
The English always use to govern d—n.'

XV

Some women use their tongues — she *look'd* a lecture,
Each eye a sermon, and her brow a homily,
An all-in-all sufficient self-director,
Like the lamented late Sir Samuel Romilly,
The Law's expounder, and the State's corrector,
Whose suicide was almost an anomaly —
One sad example more, that 'All is vanity'
(The jury brought their verdict in 'Insanity').

XVI

In short, she was a walking calculation,
Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from their covers,
Or Mrs. Trimmer's books on education,
Or 'Cœlebs' Wife' set out in quest of lovers,
Morality's prim personification,
In which not Envy's self a flaw discovers;
To others' share let 'female errors fall,'
For she had not even one — the worst of all.

XVII

Oh! she was perfect past all parallel —
Of any modern female saint's comparison;
So far above the cunning powers of hell,
Her guardian angel had given up his garrison;
Even her minutest motions went as well
As those of the best time-piece made by Harrison:
In virtues nothing earthly could surpass her,
Save thine 'incomparable oil,' Macassar!

XVIII

Perfect she was, but as perfection is
Insipid in this naughty world of ours,
Where our first parents never learn'd to kiss
Till they were exiled from their earlier bowers,
Where all was peace, and innocence, and bliss
(I wonder how they got through the twelve hours),
Don José, like a lineal son of Eve,
Went plucking various fruit without her leave.

XIX

He was a mortal of the careless kind,
With no great love for learning, or the learn'd,
Who chose to go where'er he had a mind,
And never dream'd his lady was concern'd;
The world, as usual, wickedly inclined
To see a kingdom or a house o'erturn'd,
Whisper'd he had a mistress, some said *two* —
But for domestic quarrels *one* will do.

XX

Now Donna Inez had, with all her merit,
A great opinion of her own good qualities;
Neglect, indeed, requires a saint to bear it,
And such, indeed, she was in her moralities;
But then she had a devil of a spirit,
And sometimes mix'd up fancies with realities,
And let few opportunities escape
Of getting her liege lord into a scrape.

XXI

This was an easy matter with a man
Oft in the wrong, and never on his guard;
And even the wisest, do the best they can,
Have moments, hours, and days, so unprepared,
That you might 'brain them with their lady's fan;'
And sometimes ladies hit exceeding hard,
And fans turn into falchions in fair hands,
And why and wherefore no one understands.

XXII

'T is pity learned virgins ever wed
With persons of no sort of education,
Or gentlemen, who, though well born and bred,
Grow tired of scientific conversation:
I don't choose to say much upon this head,
I 'm a plain man, and in a single station,
But — Oh! ye lords of ladies intellectual,
Inform us truly, have they not hen-peck'd you all?

XXIII

Don José and his lady quarrell'd — *why*,
Not any of the many could divine,
Though several thousand people chose to try,
'T was surely no concern of theirs nor mine;
I loathe that low vice — curiosity;
But if there 's anything in which I shine,
'T is in arranging all my friends' affairs,
Not having of my own domestic cares.

XXIV

And so I interfered, and with the best
Intentions, but their treatment was not kind;
I think the foolish people were possess'd,
For neither of them could I ever find,
Although their porter afterwards confess'd —
But that 's no matter, and the worst 's behind,
For little Juan o'er me threw, down stairs,
A pail of housemaid's water unawares.

XXV

A little curly-headed, good-for-nothing,
And mischief-making monkey from his birth;
His parents ne'er agreed except in doting
Upon the most unquiet imp on earth;
Instead of quarrelling, had they been but both in
Their senses, they 'd have sent young master forth
To school, or had him soundly whipp'd at home,
To teach him manners for the time to come.

XXVI

Don José and the Donna Inez led
For some time an unhappy sort of life,
Wishing each other, not divorced, but dead;
They lived respectably as man and wife,
Their conduct was exceedingly well-bred,
And gave no outward signs of inward strife,
Until at length the smother'd fire broke out,
And put the business past all kind of doubt.

XXVII

For Inez call'd some druggists and physicians,
And tried to prove her loving lord was *mad;*
But as he had some lucid intermissions,
She next decided he was only *bad;*
Yet when they ask'd her for her depositions,
No sort of explanation could be had,
Save that her duty both to man and God
Required this conduct — which seem'd very odd.

XXVIII

She kept a journal, where his faults were noted,
And open'd certain trunks of books and letters,
All which might, if occasion served, be quoted;
And then she had all Seville for abettors,
Besides her good old grandmother (who doted);
The hearers of her case became repeaters,
Then advocates, inquisitors, and judges,
Some for amusement, others for old grudges.

XXIX

And then this best and weakest woman bore
With such serenity her husband's woes,
Just as the Spartan ladies did of yore,
Who saw their spouses kill'd, and nobly chose
Never to say a word about them more —
Calmly she heard each calumny that rose,
And saw *his* agonies with such sublimity,
That all the world exclaim'd, 'What magnanimity!'

XXX

No doubt this patience, when the world is damning us,
Is philosophic in our former friends;
'T is also pleasant to be deem'd magnanimous,
The more so in obtaining our own ends;
And what the lawyers call a '*malus animus*'
Conduct like this by no means comprehends;
Revenge in person 's certainly no virtue,
But then 't is not *my* fault, if *others* hurt you.

XXXI

And if your quarrels should rip up old stories,
And help them with a lie or two additional,
I'm not to blame, as you well know — no more is
Any one else — they were become traditional;
Besides, their resurrection aids our glories
By contrast, which is what we just were wishing all:
And science profits by this resurrection —
Dead scandals form good subjects for dissection.

XXXII

Their friends had tried at reconciliation,
Then their relations, who made matters worse.
('T were hard to tell upon a like occasion
To whom it may be best to have recourse —
I can't say much for friend or yet relation):
The lawyers did their utmost for divorce,
But scarce a fee was paid on either side
Before, unluckily, Don José died.

XXXIII

He died: and most unluckily, because,
According to all hints I could collect
From counsel learned in those kinds of laws
(Although their talk 's obscure and circumspect),
His death contrived to spoil a charming cause;
A thousand pities also with respect
To public feeling, which on this occasion
Was manifested in a great sensation.

XXXIV

But, ah! he died; and buried with him lay
The public feeling and the lawyers' fees:
His house was sold, his servants sent away,
A Jew took one of his two mistresses,
A priest the other — at least so they say:
I ask'd the doctors after his disease —
He died of the slow fever call'd the tertian,
And left his widow to her own aversion.

XXXV

Yet José was an honourable man,
That I must say who knew him very well;
Therefore his frailties I 'll no further scan
Indeed there were not many more to tell;
And if his passions now and then outran
Discretion, and were not so peaceable
As Numa's (who was also named Pompilius),
He had been ill brought up, and was born bilious.

XXXVI

Whate'er might be his worthlessness or worth,
Poor fellow! he had many things to wound him.
Let 's own — since it can do no good on earth —
It was a trying moment that which found him
Standing alone beside his desolate hearth,
Where all his household gods lay shiver'd round him:
No choice was left his feelings or his pride,
Save death or Doctors' Commons — so he died.

XXXVII

Dying intestate, Juan was sole heir
To a chancery suit, and messuages, and lands,
Which, with a long minority and care,
Promised to turn out well in proper hands:
Inez became sole guardian, which was fair,
And answer'd but to nature's just demands;
An only son left with an only mother
Is brought up much more wisely than another.

XXXVIII

Sagest of women, even of widows, she
Resolved that Juan should be quite a paragon,
And worthy of the noblest pedigree
(His sire was of Castile, his dam from Aragon):
Then for accomplishments of chivalry,
In case our lord the king should go to war again,
He learn'd the arts of riding, fencing, gunnery,
And how to scale a fortress — or a nunnery.

XXXIX

But that which Donna Inez most desired,
And saw into herself each day before all

The learned tutors whom for him she hired,
Was, that his breeding should be strictly moral:
Much into all his studies she inquired,
And so they were submitted first to her, all,
Arts, sciences, no branch was made a mystery
To Juan's eyes, excepting natural history.

XL

The languages, especially the dead,
The sciences, and most of all the abstruse,
The arts, at least all such as could be said
To be the most remote from common use,
In all these he was much and deeply read;
But not a page of any thing that 's loose,
Or hints continuation of the species,
Was ever suffer'd, lest he should grow vicious.

XLI

His classic studies made a little puzzle,
Because of filthy loves of gods and goddesses,
Who in the earlier ages raised a bustle,
But never put on pantaloons or bodices;
His reverend tutors had at times a tussle,
And for their Æneids, Iliads, and Odysseys,
Were forced to make an odd sort of apology,
For Donna Inez dreaded the Mythology.

XLII

Ovid 's a rake, as half his verses show him,
Anacreon's morals are a still worse sample,
Catullus scarcely has a decent poem,
I don't think Sappho's Ode a good example,
Although Longinus tells us there is no hymn
Where the sublime soars forth on wings more ample:
But Virgil's songs are pure, except that horrid one
Beginning with 'Formosum Pastor Corydon.'

XLIII

Lucretius' irreligion is too strong,
For early stomachs, to prove wholesome food;
I can't help thinking Juvenal was wrong,
Although no doubt his real intent was good,
For speaking out so plainly in his song,
So much indeed as to be downright rude;
And then what proper person can be partial
To all those nauseous epigrams of Martial?

XLIV

Juan was taught from out the best edition,
Expurgated by learned men, who place,
Judiciously, from out the schoolboy's vision,
The grosser parts; but, fearful to deface
Too much their modest bard by this omission,
And pitying sore his mutilated case,
They only add them all in an appendix,
Which saves, in fact, the trouble of an index;

XLV

For there we have them all 'at one fell swoop,'
Instead of being scatter'd through the pages;
They stand forth marshall'd in a handsome troop,
To meet the ingenuous youth of future ages,
Till some less rigid editor shall stoop
To call them back into their separate cages,
Instead of standing staring all together,
Like garden gods — and not so decent either.

XLVI

The Missal too (it was the family Missal)
Was ornamented in a sort of way
Which ancient mass-books often are, and this all
Kinds of grotesques illumined; and how they,
Who saw those figures on the margin kiss all,
Could turn their optics to the text and pray,
Is more than I know — But Don Juan's mother
Kept this herself, and gave her son another.

XLVII

Sermons he read, and lectures he endured,
And homilies, and lives of all the saints;
To Jerome and to Chrysostom inured,
He did not take such studies for restraints;

But how faith is acquired, and then ensured,
So well not one of the aforesaid paints
As Saint Augustine in his fine Confessions,
Which make the reader envy his transgressions.

XLVIII

This, too, was a seal'd book to little Juan —
I can't but say that his mamma was right,
If such an education was the true one.
She scarcely trusted him from out her sight;
Her maids were old, and if she took a new one,
You might be sure she was a perfect fright;
She did this during even her husband's life —
I recommend as much to every wife.

XLIX

Young Juan wax'd in goodliness and grace;
At six a charming child, and at eleven
With all the promise of as fine a face
As e'er to man's maturer growth was given:
He studied steadily, and grew apace,
And seem'd, at least, in the right road to heaven,
For half his days were pass'd at church, the other
Between his tutors, confessor, and mother.

L

At six, I said, he was a charming child,
At twelve he was a fine, but quiet boy;
Although in infancy a little wild,
They tamed him down amongst them: to destroy
His natural spirit not in vain they toil'd,
At least it seem'd so; and his mother's joy
Was to declare how sage, and still, and steady,
Her young philosopher was grown already.

LI

I had my doubts, perhaps I have them still,
But what I say is neither here nor there:
I knew his father well, and have some skill
In character — but it would not be fair
From sire to son to augur good or ill:
He and his wife were an ill-sorted pair —
But scandal 's my aversion — I protest
Against all evil speaking, even in jest.

LII

For my part I say nothing — nothing — but
This I will say — my reasons are my own —
That if I had an only son to put
To school (as God be praised that I have none),
'T is not with Donna Inez I would shut
Him up to learn his catechism alone,
No — no — I 'd send him out betimes to college,
For there it was I pick'd up my own knowledge.

LIII

For there one learns — 't is not for me to boast,
Though I acquired — but I pass over *that*,
As well as all the Greek I since have lost:
I say that there 's the place — but '*Verbum sat.*'
I think I pick'd up too, as well as most,
Knowledge of matters — but no matter *what* —
I never married — but, I think, I know
That sons should not be educated so.

LIV

Young Juan now was sixteen years of age,
Tall, handsome, slender, but well knit: he seem'd
Active, though not so sprightly, as a page;
And everybody but his mother deem'd
Him almost man; but she flew in a rage
And bit her lips (for else she might have scream'd)
If any said so, for to be precocious
Was in her eyes a thing the most atrocious.

LV

Amongst her numerous acquaintance, all
Selected for discretion and devotion,
There was the Donna Julia, whom to call
Pretty were but to give a feeble notion
Of many charms in her as natural
As sweetness to the flower, or salt to ocean,
Her zone to Venus, or his bow to Cupid
(But this last simile is trite and stupid).

LVI

The darkness of her Oriental eye
Accorded with her Moorish origin
(Her blood was not all Spanish, by the by;
In Spain, you know, this is a sort of sin);
When proud Granada fell, and, forced to fly,
Boabdil wept, of Donna Julia's kin
Some went to Africa, some stay'd in Spain,
Her great-great-grandmamma chose to remain.

LVII

She married (I forget the pedigree)
With an Hidalgo, who transmitted down
His blood less noble than such blood should be;
At such alliances his sires would frown,
In that point so precise in each degree
That they bred *in and in*, as might be shown,
Marrying their cousins — nay, their aunts, and nieces,
Which always spoils the breed, if it increases.

LVIII

This heathenish cross restored the breed again,
Ruin'd its blood, but much improved its flesh;
For from a root the ugliest in Old Spain
Sprung up a branch as beautiful as fresh;
The sons no more were short, the daughters plain:
But there 's a rumour which I fain would hush,
'T is said that Donna Julia's grandmamma
Produced her Don more heirs at love than law.

LIX

However this might be, the race went on
Improving still through every generation,
Until it centred in an only son,
Who left an only daughter; my narration
May have suggested that this single one
Could be but Julia (whom on this occasion
I shall have much to speak about), and she
Was married, charming, chaste, and twenty-three.

LX

Her eye (I 'm very fond of handsome eyes)
Was large and dark, suppressing half its fire
Until she spoke, then through its soft disguise
Flash'd an expression more of pride than ire,
And love than either; and there would arise
A something in them which was not desire,
But would have been, perhaps, but for the soul
Which struggled through and chasten'd down the whole.

LXI

Her glossy hair was cluster'd o'er a brow
Bright with intelligence, and fair, and smooth;
Her eyebrow's shape was like th' aërial bow,
Her cheek all purple with the beam of youth,
Mounting at times to a transparent glow,
As if her veins ran lightning; she, in sooth,
Possess'd an air and grace by no means common:
Her stature tall — I hate a dumpy woman.

LXII

Wedded she was some years, and to a man
Of fifty, and such husbands are in plenty;
And yet, I think, instead of such a ONE
'T were better to have TWO of five-and-twenty,
Especially in countries near the sun:
And now I think on 't, '*mi vien in mente*,'
Ladies even of the most uneasy virtue
Prefer a spouse whose age is short of thirty.

LXIII

'T is a sad thing, I cannot choose but say,
And all the fault of that indecent sun,
Who cannot leave alone our helpless clay,
But will keep baking, broiling, burning on,
That howsoever people fast and pray,
The flesh is frail, and so the soul undone:
What men call gallantry, and gods adultery,
Is much more common where the climate 's sultry.

LXIV

Happy the nations of the moral North!
Where all is virtue, and the winter season

Sends sin, without a rag on, shivering forth
('T was snow that brought St. Anthony to reason);
Where juries cast up what a wife is worth,
By laying whate'er sum in mulct they please on
The lover, who must pay a handsome price,
Because it is a marketable vice.

LXV

Alfonso was the name of Julia's lord,
A man well looking for his years, and who
Was neither much beloved nor yet abhorr'd:
They lived together, as most people do,
Suffering each other's foibles by accord,
And not exactly either *one* or *two;*
Yet he was jealous, though he did not show it,
For jealousy dislikes the world to know it.

LXVI

Julia was — yet I never could see why —
With Donna Inez quite a favourite friend;
Between their tastes there was small sympathy,
For not a line had Julia ever penn'd:
Some people whisper (but no doubt they lie,
For malice still imputes some private end)
That Inez had, ere Don Alfonso's marriage,
Forgot with him her very prudent carriage;

LXVII

And that still keeping up the old connection,
Which time had lately render'd much more chaste,
She took his lady also in affection,
And certainly this course was much the best:
She flatter'd Julia with her sage protection,
And complimented Don Alfonso's taste;
And if she could not (who can?) silence scandal,
At least she left it a more slender handle.

LXVIII

I can't tell whether Julia saw the affair
With other people's eyes, or if her own
Discoveries made, but none could be aware
Of this, at least no symptom e'er was shown;
Perhaps she did not know, or did not care,
Indifferent from the first or callous grown:
I'm really puzzled what to think or say,
She kept her counsel in so close a way.

LXIX

Juan she saw, and, as a pretty child,
Caress'd him often — such a thing might be
Quite innocently done, and harmless styled,
When she had twenty years, and thirteen he;
But I am not so sure I should have smiled
When he was sixteen, Julia twenty-three;
These few short years make wondrous alterations,
Particularly amongst sun-burnt nations.

LXX

Whate'er the cause might be, they had become
Changed; for the dame grew distant, the youth shy,
Their looks cast down, their greetings almost dumb,
And much embarrassment in either eye;
There surely will be little doubt with some
That Donna Julia knew the reason why,
But as for Juan, he had no more notion
Than he who never saw the sea of ocean.

LXXI

Yet Julia's very coldness still was kind,
And tremulously gentle her small hand
Withdrew itself from his, but left behind
A little pressure, thrilling, and so bland
And slight, so very slight, that to the mind
'T was but a doubt; but ne'er magician's wand
Wrought change with all Armida's fairy art
Like what this light touch left on Juan's heart.

LXXII

And if she met him, though she smiled no more,
She look'd a sadness sweeter than her smile,
As if her heart had deeper thoughts in store
She must not own, but cherish'd more the while
For that compression in its burning core;
Even innocence itself has many a wile,
And will not dare to trust itself with truth,
And love is taught hypocrisy from youth.

LXXIII

But passion most dissembles, yet betrays
Even by its darkness; as the blackest sky
Foretells the heaviest tempest, it displays
Its workings through the vainly guarded eye,
And in whatever aspect it arrays
Itself, 't is still the same hypocrisy;
Coldness or anger, even disdain or hate,
Are masks it often wears, and still too late.

LXXIV

Then there were sighs, the deeper for suppression,
And stolen glances, sweeter for the theft,
And burning blushes, though for no transgression,
Tremblings when met, and restlessness when left;
All these are little preludes to possession,
Of which young passion cannot be bereft,
And merely tend to show how greatly love is
Embarrass'd at first starting with a novice.

LXXV

Poor Julia's heart was in an awkward state;
She felt it going, and resolved to make
The noblest efforts for herself and mate,
For honour's, pride's, religion's, virtue's sake;
Her resolutions were most truly great,
And almost might have made a Tarquin quake:
She pray'd the Virgin Mary for her grace,
As being the best judge of a lady's case.

LXXVI

She vow'd she never would see Juan more,
And next day paid a visit to his mother,
And look'd extremely at the opening door,
Which, by the Virgin's grace, let in another;
Grateful she was, and yet a little sore —
Again it opens, it can be no other,
'T is surely Juan now — No! I'm afraid
That night the Virgin was no further pray'd.

LXXVII

She now determined that a virtuous woman
Should rather face and overcome temptation,
That flight was base and dastardly, and no man
Should ever give her heart the least sensation;
That is to say, a thought beyond the common
Preference, that we must feel upon occasion
For people who are pleasanter than others,
But then they only seem so many brothers.

LXXVIII

And even if by chance — and who can tell?
The devil 's so very sly — she should discover
That all within was not so very well,
And, if still free, that such or such a lover
Might please perhaps, a virtuous wife can quell
Such thoughts, and be the better when they 're over;
And if the man should ask, 't is but denial:
I recommend young ladies to make trial.

LXXIX

And then there are such things as love divine,
Bright and immaculate, unmix'd and pure,
Such as the angels think so very fine,
And matrons who would be no less secure,
Platonic, perfect, 'just such love as mine;'
Thus Julia said — and thought so, to be sure;
And so I 'd have her think, were I the man
On whom her reveries celestial ran.

LXXX

Such love is innocent, and may exist
Between young persons without any danger.
A hand may first, and then a lip be kist;
For my part, to such doings I 'm a stranger,
But *hear* these freedoms form the utmost list
Of all o'er which such love may be a ranger:
If people go beyond, 't is quite a crime,
But not my fault — I tell them all in time.

LXXXI

Love, then, but love within its proper limits,
Was Julia's innocent determination
In young Don Juan's favour, and to him its

Exertion might be useful on occasion;
And, lighted at too pure a shrine to dim its
Ethereal lustre, with what sweet persuasion
He might be taught, by love and her together —
I really don't know what, nor Julia either.

LXXXII

Fraught with this fine intention, and well fenced
In mail of proof — her purity of soul —
She, for the future of her strength convinced,
And that her honour was a rock, or mole,
Exceeding sagely from that hour dispensed
With any kind of troublesome control;
But whether Julia to the task was equal
Is that which must be mention'd in the sequel.

LXXXIII

Her plan she deem'd both innocent and feasible,
And, surely, with a stripling of sixteen
Not scandal's fangs could fix on much that 's seizable,
Or if they did so, satisfied to mean
Nothing but what was good, her breast was peaceable —
A quiet conscience makes one so serene!
Christians have burnt each other, quite persuaded
That all the Apostles would have done as they did.

LXXXIV

And if in the mean time her husband died,
But Heaven forbid that such a thought should cross
Her brain, though in a dream! (and then she sigh'd)
Never could she survive that common loss;
But just suppose that moment should betide,
I only say suppose it — *inter nos.*
(This should be *entre nous,* for Julia thought
In French, but then the rhyme would go for naught.)

LXXXV

I only say suppose this supposition:
Juan being then grown up to man's estate
Would fully suit a widow of condition,
Even seven years hence it would not be too late;
And in the interim (to pursue this vision)
The mischief, after all, could not be great,
For he would learn the rudiments of love,
I mean the seraph way of those above.

LXXXVI

So much for Julia. Now we 'll turn to Juan.
Poor little fellow! he had no idea
Of his own case, and never hit the true one;
In feelings quick as Ovid's Miss Medea,
He puzzled over what he found a new one,
But not as yet imagined it could be a
Thing quite in course, and not at all alarming,
Which, with a little patience, might grow charming.

LXXXVII

Silent and pensive, idle, restless, slow,
His home deserted for the lonely wood,
Tormented with a wound he could not know,
His, like all deep grief, plunged in solitude:
I 'm fond myself of solitude or so,
But then, I beg it may be understood,
By solitude I mean a sultan's, not
A hermit's, with a haram for a grot.

LXXXVIII

'Oh Love! in such a wilderness as this,
Where transport and security entwine,
Here is the empire of thy perfect bliss,
And here thou art a god indeed divine.'
The bard I quote from does not sing amiss,
With the exception of the second line,
For that same twining 'transport and security'
Are twisted to a phrase of some obscurity.

LXXXIX

The poet meant, no doubt, and thus appeals
To the good sense and senses of mankind,
The very thing which every body feels,
As all have found on trial, or may find,
That no one likes to be disturb'd at meals
Or love. — I won't say more about 'entwined'
Or 'transport,' as we knew all that before,
But beg 'Security' will bolt the door.

XC

Young Juan wander'd by the glassy brooks,
Thinking unutterable things; he threw
Himself at length within the leafy nooks
Where the wild branch of the cork forest grew:

There poets find materials for their books,
And every now and then we read them through,
So that their plan and prosody are eligible,
Unless, like Wordsworth, they prove unintelligible.

XCI

He, Juan (and not Wordsworth), so pursued
His self-communion with his own high soul,
Until his mighty heart, in its great mood,
Had mitigated part, though not the whole
Of its disease; he did the best he could
With things not very subject to control,
And turn'd, without perceiving his condition,
Like Coleridge, into a metaphysician.

XCII

He thought about himself, and the whole earth,
Of man the wonderful, and of the stars,
And how the deuce they ever could have birth;
And then he thought of earthquakes, and of wars,
How many miles the moon might have in girth,
Of air-balloons, and of the many bars
To perfect knowledge of the boundless skies; —
And then he thought of Donna Julia's eyes.

XCIII

In thoughts like these true wisdom may discern
Longings sublime, and aspirations high,
Which some are born with, but the most part learn
To plague themselves withal, they know not why:
'T was strange that one so young should thus concern
His brain about the action of the sky;
If *you* think 't was philosophy that this did,
I can't help thinking puberty assisted.

XCIV

He pored upon the leaves, and on the flowers,
And heard a voice in all the winds; and then
He thought of wood-nymphs and immortal bowers,
And how the goddesses came down to men:
He miss'd the pathway, he forgot the hours,
And when he look'd upon his watch again,
He found how much old Time had been a winner —
He also found that he had lost his dinner.

XCV

Sometimes he turn'd to gaze upon his book,
Boscan, or Garcilasso; — by the wind
Even as the page is rustled while we look,
So by the poesy of his own mind
Over the mystic leaf his soul was shook,
As if 't were one whereon magicians bind
Their spells, and give them to the passing gale,
According to some good old woman's tale.

XCVI

Thus would he while his lonely hours away
Dissatisfied, nor knowing what he wanted;
Nor glowing reverie, nor poet's lay,
Could yield his spirit that for which it panted,
A bosom whereon he his head might lay,
And hear the heart beat with the love it granted,
With — several other things, which I forget,
Or which, at least, I need not mention yet.

XCVII

Those lonely walks, and lengthening reveries,
Could not escape the gentle Julia's eyes;
She saw that Juan was not at his ease;
But that which chiefly may, and must surprise,
Is, that the Donna Inez did not tease
Her only son with question or surmise:
Whether it was she did not see, or would not,
Or, like all very clever people, could not.

XCVIII

This may seem strange, but yet 't is very common;
For instance — gentlemen, whose ladies take
Leave to o'erstep the written rights of woman,
And break the — Which commandment is 't they break?
(I have forgot the number, and think no man
Should rashly quote, for fear of a mistake.)

I say, when these same gentlemen are jealous,
They make some blunder, which their ladies tell us.

XCIX

A real husband always is suspicious,
But still no less suspects in the wrong place,
Jealous of some one who had no such wishes,
Or pandering blindly to his own disgrace,
By harbouring some dear friend extremely vicious;
The last indeed 's infallibly the case:
And when the spouse and friend are gone off wholly,
He wonders at their vice, and not his folly.

C

Thus parents also are at times short-sighted;
Though watchful as the lynx, they ne'er discover,
The while the wicked world beholds delighted,
Young Hopeful's mistress, or Miss Fanny's lover,
Till some confounded escapade has blighted
The plan of twenty years, and all is over;
And then the mother cries, the father swears,
And wonders why the devil he got heirs.

CI

But Inez was so anxious, and so clear
Of sight, that I must think, on this occasion,
She had some other motive much more near
For leaving Juan to this new temptation;
But what that motive was, I sha'n't say here;
Perhaps to finish Juan's education,
Perhaps to open Don Alfonso's eyes,
In case he thought his wife too great a prize.

CII

It was upon a day, a summer's day;—
Summer 's indeed a very dangerous season,
And so is spring about the end of May;
The sun, no doubt, is the prevailing reason;
But whatsoe'er the cause is, one may say,
And stand convicted of more truth than treason,
That there are months which nature grows more merry in,—
March has its hares, and May must have its heroine.

CIII

'T was on a summer's day — the sixth of June: —
I like to be particular in dates,
Not only of the age, and year, but moon;
They are a sort of post-house, where the Fates
Change horses, making history change its tune,
Then spur away o'er empires and o'er states,
Leaving at last not much besides chronology,
Excepting the post-obits of theology.

CIV

'T was on the sixth of June, about the hour
Of half-past six — perhaps still nearer seven —
When Julia sate within as pretty a bower
As e'er held houri in that heathenish heaven
Described by Mahomet, and Anacreon Moore,
To whom the lyre and laurels have been given,
With all the trophies of triumphant song —
He won them well, and may he wear them long!

CV

She sate, but not alone; I know not well
How this same interview had taken place,
And even if I knew, I should not tell —
People should hold their tongues in any case;
No matter how or why the thing befell,
But there were she and Juan, face to face —
When two such faces are so, 't would be wise,
But very difficult, to shut their eyes.

CVI

How beautiful she look'd! her conscious heart
Glow'd in her cheek, and yet she felt no wrong.

Oh Love! how perfect is thy mystic art,
Strengthening the weak, and trampling on the strong,
How self-deceitful is the sagest part
Of mortals whom thy lure hath led along —
The precipice she stood on was immense,
So was her creed in her own innocence.

CVII

She thought of her own strength, and Juan's youth,
And of the folly of all prudish fears,
Victorious virtue, and domestic truth,
And then of Don Alfonso's fifty years:
I wish these last had not occurr'd, in sooth,
Because that number rarely much endears,
And through all climes, the snowy and the sunny,
Sounds ill in love, whate'er it may in money.

CVIII

When people say, 'I've told you *fifty* times,'
They mean to scold, and very often do;
When poets say, 'I've written *fifty* rhymes,'
They make you dread that they 'll recite them too;
In gangs of *fifty*, thieves commit their crimes;
At *fifty* love for love is rare, 't is true,
But then, no doubt, it equally as true is,
A good deal may be bought for *fifty* Louis.

CIX

Julia had honour, virtue, truth, and love,
For Don Alfonso; and she inly swore,
By all the vows below to powers above,
She never would disgrace the ring she wore,
Nor leave a wish which wisdom might reprove;
And while she ponder'd this, besides much more,
One hand on Juan's carelessly was thrown,
Quite by mistake — she thought it was her own;

CX

Unconsciously she lean'd upon the other,
Which play'd within the tangles of her hair:
And to contend with thoughts she could not smother
She seem'd by the distraction of her air.
'T was surely very wrong in Juan's mother
To leave together this imprudent pair,
She who for many years had watch'd her son so —
I 'm very certain *mine* would not have done so.

CXI

The hand which still held Juan's, by degrees
Gently, but palpably confirm'd its grasp,
As if it said, 'Detain me, if you please;'
Yet there 's no doubt she only meant to clasp
His fingers with a pure Platonic squeeze:
She would have shrunk as from a toad, or asp,
Had she imagined such a thing could rouse
A feeling dangerous to a prudent spouse.

CXII

I cannot know what Juan thought of this,
But what he did, is much what you would do;
His young lip thank'd it with a grateful kiss,
And then, abash'd at its own joy, withdrew
In deep despair, lest he had done amiss, —
Love is so very timid when 't is new:
She blush'd, and frown'd not, but she strove to speak,
And held her tongue, her voice was grown so weak.

CXIII

The sun set, and up rose the yellow moon:
The devil 's in the moon for mischief; they
Who call'd her CHASTE, methinks, began too soon
Their nomenclature; there is not a day,
The longest, not the twenty-first of June,
Sees half the business in a wicked way
On which three single hours of moonshine smile —
And then she looks so modest all the while.

CXIV

There is a dangerous silence in that hour,
A stillness, which leaves room for the full soul
To open all itself, without the power
Of calling wholly back its self-control;

The silver light which, hallowing tree and tower,
Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole,
Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it throws
A loving languor, which is not repose.

CXV

And Julia sate with Juan, half embraced
And half retiring from the glowing arm,
Which trembled like the bosom where 't was placed;
Yet still she must have thought there was no harm,
Or else 't were easy to withdraw her waist;
But then the situation had its charm,
And then — God knows what next — I can't go on;
I 'm almost sorry that I e'er begun.

CXVI

Oh Plato! Plato! you have paved the way,
With your confounded fantasies, to more
Immoral conduct by the fancied sway
Your system feigns o'er the controulless core
Of human hearts, than all the long array
Of poets and romancers: — You 're a bore,
A charlatan, a coxcomb — and have been,
At best, no better than a go-between.

CXVII

And Julia's voice was lost, except in sighs,
Until too late for useful conversation;
The tears were gushing from her gentle eyes,
I wish indeed they had not had occasion,
But who, alas! can love, and then be wise?
Not that remorse did not oppose temptation;
A little still she strove, and much repented,
And whispering 'I will ne'er consent' — consented.

CXVIII

'T is said that Xerxes offer'd a reward
To those who could invent him a new pleasure:
Methinks the requisition 's rather hard,
And must have cost his majesty a treasure:
For my part, I 'm a moderate-minded bard,
Fond of a little love (which I call leisure);
I care not for new pleasures, as the old
Are quite enough for me, so they but hold.

CXIX

Oh Pleasure! you are indeed a pleasant thing,
Although one must be damn'd for you, no doubt:
I make a resolution every spring
Of reformation, ere the year run out,
But somehow, this my vestal vow takes wing,
Yet still, I trust it may be kept throughout:
I 'm very sorry, very much ashamed,
And mean, next winter, to be quite reclaim'd.

CXX

Here my chaste Muse a liberty must take —
Start not! still chaster reader — she 'll be nice hence-
Forward, and there is no great cause to quake;
This liberty is a poetic licence,
Which some irregularity may make
In the design, and as I have a high sense
Of Aristotle and the Rules, 't is fit
To beg his pardon when I err a bit.

CXXI

This licence is to hope the reader will
Suppose from June the sixth (the fatal day,
Without whose epoch my poetic skill
For want of facts would all be thrown away),
But keeping Julia and Don Juan still
In sight, that several months have pass'd; we 'll say
'T was in November, but I 'm not so sure
About the day — the era 's more obscure.

CXXII

We 'll talk of that anon. — 'T is sweet to hear
At midnight on the blue and moonlit deep
The song and oar of Adria's gondolier,
By distance mellow'd, o'er the waters sweep;
'T is sweet to see the evening star appear;
'T is sweet to listen as the night-winds creep
From leaf to leaf; 't is sweet to view on high
The rainbow, based on ocean, span the sky.

CXXIII

'T is sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest bark
Bay deep-mouth'd welcome as we draw near home;
'T is sweet to know there is an eye will mark
Our coming, and look brighter when we come;
'T is sweet to be awaken'd by the lark,
Or lull'd by falling waters; sweet the hum
Of bees, the voice of girls, the song of birds,
The lisp of children, and their earliest words.

CXXIV

Sweet is the vintage, when the showering grapes
In Bacchanal profusion reel to earth,
Purple and gushing: sweet are our escapes
From civic revelry to rural mirth;
Sweet to the miser are his glittering heaps,
Sweet to the father is his first-born's birth,
Sweet is revenge — especially to women,
Pillage to soldiers, prize-money to seamen.

CXXV

Sweet is a legacy, and passing sweet
The unexpected death of some old lady
Or gentleman of seventy years complete,
Who 've made 'us youth' wait too — too long already
For an estate, or cash, or country seat,
Still breaking, but with stamina so steady
That all the Israelites are fit to mob its
Next owner for their double-damn'd post-obits.

CXXVI

'T is sweet to win, no matter how, one's laurels,
By blood or ink; 't is sweet to put an end
To strife; 't is sometimes sweet to have our quarrels,
Particularly with a tiresome friend:
Sweet is old wine in bottles, ale in barrels;
Dear is the helpless creature we defend
Against the world; and dear the schoolboy spot
We ne'er forget, though there we are forgot.

CXXVII

But sweeter still than this, than these, than all,
Is first and passionate love — it stands alone,
Like Adam's recollection of his fall;
The tree of knowledge has been pluck'd — all 's known —
And life yields nothing further to recall
Worthy of this ambrosial sin, so shown,
No doubt in fable, as the unforgiven
Fire which Prometheus filch'd for us from heaven.

CXXVIII

Man 's a strange animal, and makes strange use
Of his own nature. and the various arts,
And likes particularly to produce
Some new experiment to show his parts;
This is the age of oddities let loose,
Where different talents find their different marts;
You 'd best begin with truth, and when you 've lost your
Labour, there 's a sure market for imposture.

CXXIX

What opposite discoveries we have seen!
(Signs of true genius, and of empty pockets.)
One makes new noses, one a guillotine,
One breaks your bones, one sets them in their sockets;
But vaccination certainly has been
A kind antithesis to Congreve's rockets,
With which the Doctor paid off an old pox,
By borrowing a new one from an ox.

CXXX

Bread has been made (indifferent) from potatoes;
And galvanism has set some corpses grinning,
But has not answer'd like the apparatus
Of the Humane Society's beginning
By which men are unsuffocated gratis:
What wondrous new machines have late been spinning!
I said the small-pox has gone out of late;
Perhaps it may be follow'd by the great.

CXXXI

'T is said the great came from America;
Perhaps it may set out on its return, —
The population there so spreads, they say
'T is grown high time to thin it in its turn,
With war, or plague, or famine, any way,
So that civilisation they may learn;

And which in ravage the more loathsome evil is —
Their real lues, or our pseudo-syphilis ?

CXXXII

This is the patent-age of new inventions
For killing bodies, and for saving souls,
All propagated with the best intentions;
Sir Humphry Davy's lantern, by which coals
Are safely mined for in the mode he mentions,
Tombuctoo travels, voyages to the Poles,
Are ways to benefit mankind, as true,
Perhaps, as shooting them at Waterloo.

CXXXIII

Man 's a phenomenon, one knows not what,
And wonderful beyond all wondrous measure;
'T is pity though, in this sublime world, that
Pleasure 's a sin, and sometimes sin 's a pleasure;
Few mortals know what end they would be at,
But whether glory, power, or love, or treasure,
The path is through perplexing ways, and when
The goal is gain'd, we die, you know — and then —

CXXXIV

What then ? — I do not know, no more do you —
And so good night. — Return we to our story:
'T was in November, when fine days are few,
And the far mountains wax a little hoary,
And clap a white cape on their mantles blue;
And the sea dashes round the promontory,
And the loud breaker boils against the rock,
And sober suns must set at five o'clock.

CXXXV

'T was, as the watchmen say, a cloudy night;
No moon, no stars, the wind was low or loud
By gusts, and many a sparkling hearth was bright
With the piled wood, round which the family crowd;
There 's something cheerful in that sort of light,
Even as a summer sky 's without a cloud:
I 'm fond of fire, and crickets, and all that,
A lobster salad, and champagne, and chat.

CXXXVI

'T was midnight — Donna Julia was in bed,
Sleeping, most probably, — when at her door
Arose a clatter might awake the dead,
If they had never been awoke before,
And that they have been so we all have read,
And are to be so, at the least, once more; —
The door was fasten'd, but with voice and fist
First knocks were heard, then 'Madam — Madam — hist !

CXXXVII

'For God's sake, Madam — Madam — here 's my master,
With more than half the city at his back —
Was ever heard of such a curst disaster !
'T is not my fault — I kept good watch — Alack !
Do pray undo the bolt a little faster —
They 're on the stair just now, and in a crack
Will all be here; perhaps he yet may fly —
Surely the window 's not so *very* high ! '

CXXXVIII

By this time Don Alfonso was arrived,
With torches, friends, and servants in great number;
The major part of them had long been wived,
And therefore paused not to disturb the slumber
Of any wicked woman, who contrived
By stealth her husband's temples to encumber:
Examples of this kind are so contagious,
Were *one* not punish'd, *all* would be outrageous.

CXXXIX

I can't tell how, or why, or what suspicion
Could enter into Don Alfonso's head;
But for a cavalier of his condition
It surely was exceedingly ill-bred,
Without a word of previous admonition,
To hold a levee round his lady's bed,
And summon lackeys, arm'd with fire and sword,
To prove himself the thing he most abhorr'd.

CXL

Poor Donna Julia, starting as from sleep
(Mind — that I do not say — she had not slept),
Began at once to scream, and yawn, and weep;
Her maid Antonia, who was an adept,
Contrived to fling the bed-clothes in a heap,
As if she had just now from out them crept:
I can't tell why she should take all this trouble
To prove her mistress had been sleeping double.

CXLI

But Julia mistress, and Antonia maid,
Appear'd like two poor harmless women, who
Of goblins, but still more of men afraid,
Had thought one man might be deterr'd by two,
And therefore side by side were gently laid,
Until the hours of absence should run through,
And truant husband should return, and say,
'My dear, I was the first who came away.'

CXLII

Now Julia found at length a voice, and cried,
'In heaven's name, Don Alfonso, what d' ye mean?
Has madness seized you? would that I had died
Ere such a monster's victim I had been!
What may this midnight violence betide,
A sudden fit of drunkenness or spleen?
Dare you suspect me, whom the thought would kill?
Search, then, the room!' — Alfonso said, 'I will.'

CXLIII

He search'd, *they* search'd, and rummaged everywhere,
Closet and clothes' press, chest and window-seat,
And found much linen, lace, and several pair
Of stockings, slippers, brushes, combs, complete,
With other articles of ladies fair,
To keep them beautiful, or leave them neat:
Arras they prick'd and curtains with their swords,
And wounded several shutters, and some boards.

CXLIV

Under the bed they search'd, and there they found —
No matter what — it was not that they sought;
They open'd windows, gazing if the ground
Had signs or footmarks, but the earth said nought;
And then they stared each other's faces round:
'T is odd, not one of all these seekers thought,
And seems to me almost a sort of blunder,
Of looking *in* the bed as well as under.

CXLV

During this inquisition, Julia's tongue
Was not asleep — 'Yes, search and search,' she cried,
'Insult on insult heap, and wrong on wrong!
It was for this that I became a bride!
For this in silence I have suffer'd long
A husband like Alfonso at my side;
But now I 'll bear no more, nor here remain,
If there be law or lawyers in all Spain.

CXLVI

'Yes, Don Alfonso! husband now no more,
If ever you indeed deserved the name,
Is 't worthy of your years? — you have threescore —
Fifty, or sixty, it is all the same —
Is 't wise or fitting, causeless to explore
For facts against a virtuous woman's fame?
Ungrateful, perjured, barbarous Don Alfonso,
How dare you think your lady would go on so?

CXLVII

'Is it for this I have disdain'd to hold
The common privileges of my sex?
That I have chosen a confessor so old
And deaf, that any other it would vex,
And never once he has had cause to scold,
But found my very innocence perplex
So much, he always doubted I was married —
How sorry you will be when I've miscarried!

CXLVIII

'Was it for this that no Cortejo e'er
I yet have chosen from out the youth of Seville?
Is it for this I scarce went anywhere,
Except to bull-fights, mass, play, rout, and revel?
Is it for this, whate'er my suitors were,
I favor'd none — nay, was almost uncivil?
Is it for this that General Count O'Reilly,
Who took Algiers, declares I used him vilely?

CXLIX

'Did not the Italian Musico Cazzani
Sing at my heart six months at least in vain?
Did not his countryman, Count Corniani,
Call me the only virtuous wife in Spain?
Were there not also Russians, English, many?
The Count Strongstroganoff I put in pain,
And Lord Mount Coffeehouse, the Irish peer,
Who kill'd himself for love (with wine) last year.

CL

'Have I not had two bishops at my feet,
The Duke of Ichar, and Don Fernan Nunez?
And is it thus a faithful wife you treat?
I wonder in what quarter now the moon is:
I praise your vast forbearance not to beat
Me also, since the time so opportune is —
Oh, valiant man! with sword drawn and cock'd trigger,
Now, tell me, don't you cut a pretty figure?

CLI

'Was it for this you took your sudden journey,
Under pretence of business indispensable
With that sublime of rascals your attorney,
Whom I see standing there, and looking sensible
Of having play'd the fool? though both I spurn, he
Deserves the worst, his conduct's less defensible,
Because, no doubt, 't was for his dirty fee,
And not from any love to you nor me.

CLII

'If he comes here to take a deposition,
By all means let the gentleman proceed;
You've made the apartment in a fit condition:
There's pen and ink for you, sir, when you need —
Let every thing be noted with precision,
I would not you for nothing should be fee'd —
But, as my maid's undrest, pray turn your spies out.'
'Oh!' sobb'd Antonia, 'I could tear their eyes out.'

CLIII

'There is the closet, there the toilet, there
The antechamber — search them under, over;
There is the sofa, there the great arm-chair,
The chimney — which would really hold a lover.
I wish to sleep, and beg you will take care
And make no further noise, till you discover
The secret cavern of this lurking treasure —
And when 't is found, let me, too, have that pleasure.

CLIV

'And now, Hidalgo! now that you have thrown
Doubt upon me, confusion over all,
Pray have the courtesy to make it known
Who is the man you search for? how d'ye call
Him? what's his lineage? let him but be shown —
I hope he's young and handsome — is he tall?
Tell me — and be assured, that since you stain
My honour thus, it shall not be in vain.

CLV

'At least, perhaps, he has not sixty years,
At that age he would be too old for slaughter,
Or for so young a husband's jealous fears
(Antonia! let me have a glass of water).
I am ashamed of having shed these tears,
They are unworthy of my father's daughter;
My mother dream'd not in my natal hour
That I should fall into a monster's power.

CLVI

'Perhaps 't is of Antonia you are jealous,
You saw that she was sleeping by my side
When you broke in upon us with your fellows:
Look where you please — we 've nothing, sir, to hide;
Only another time, I trust, you 'll tell us,
Or for the sake of decency abide
A moment at the door, that we may be
Drest to receive so much good company.

CLVII

'And now, sir, I have done, and say no more;
The little I have said may serve to show
The guileless heart in silence may grieve o'er
The wrongs to whose exposure it is slow:
I leave you to your conscience as before,
'T will one day ask you *why* you used me so?
God grant you feel not then the bitterest grief! —
Antonia! where 's my pocket-handkerchief?'

CLVIII

She ceased, and turn'd upon her pillow; pale
She lay, her dark eyes flashing through their tears,
Like skies that rain and lighten; as a veil,
Waved and o'ershading her wan cheek, appears
Her streaming hair; the black curls strive, but fail,
To hide the glossy shoulder, which uprears
Its snow through all; — her soft lips lie apart,
And louder than her breathing beats her heart.

CLIX

The Senhor Don Alfonso stood confused;
Antonia bustled round the ransack'd room,
And, turning up her nose, with looks abused
Her master and his myrmidons, of whom
Not one, except the attorney, was amused;
He, like Achates, faithful to the tomb,
So there were quarrels, cared not for the cause,
Knowing they must be settled by the laws.

CLX

With prying snub-nose, and small eyes, he stood,
Following Antonia's motions here and there,
With much suspicion in his attitude;
For reputations he had little care;
So that a suit or action were made good,
Small pity had he for the young and fair,
And ne'er believed in negatives, till these
Were proved by competent false witnesses.

CLXI

But Don Alfonso stood with downcast looks,
And, truth to say, he made a foolish figure;
When, after searching in five hundred nooks,
And treating a young wife with so much rigour,
He gain'd no point, except some self-rebukes,
Added to those his lady with such vigour
Had pour'd upon him for the last half-hour,
Quick, thick, and heavy — as a thunder-shower.

CLXII

At first he tried to hammer an excuse,
To which the sole reply was tears and sobs,
And indications of hysterics, whose
Prologue is always certain throes, and throbs,
Gasps, and whatever else the owners choose:
Alfonso saw his wife, and thought of Job's;
He saw too, in perspective, her relations,
And then he tried to muster all his patience.

CLXIII

He stood in act to speak, or rather stammer,
But sage Antonia cut him short before

The anvil of his speech received the hammer,
With 'Pray, sir, leave the room, and say no more,
Or madam dies.' — Alfonso mutter'd, 'D—n her,'
But nothing else, the time of words was o'er;
He cast a rueful look or two, and did,
He knew not wherefore, that which he was bid.

CLXIV

With him retired his '*posse comitatus*,'
The attorney last, who linger'd near the door
Reluctantly, still tarrying there as late as
Antonia let him — not a little sore
At this most strange and unexplain'd '*hiatus*'
In Don Alfonso's facts, which just now wore
An awkward look; as he revolved the case,
The door was fasten'd in his legal face.

CLXV

No sooner was it bolted, than — Oh shame!
Oh sin! Oh sorrow! and oh womankind!
How can you do such things and keep your fame,
Unless this world, and t' other too, be blind?
Nothing so dear as an unfilch'd good name!
But to proceed — for there is more behind:
With much heartfelt reluctance be it said,
Young Juan slipp'd half-smother'd, from the bed.

CLXVI

He had been hid — I don't pretend to say
How, nor can I indeed describe the where —
Young, slender, and pack'd easily, he lay,
No doubt, in little compass, round or square;
But pity him I neither must nor may
His suffocation by that pretty pair;
'T were better, sure, to die so, than be shut
With maudlin Clarence in his Malmsey butt.

CLXVII

And, secondly, I pity not, because
He had no business to commit a sin,
Forbid by heavenly, fined by human laws,
At least 't was rather early to begin;
But at sixteen the conscience rarely gnaws
So much as when we call our old debts in
At sixty years, and draw the accompts of evil,
And find a deucèd balance with the devil.

CLXVIII

Of his position I can give no notion:
'T is written in the Hebrew Chronicle,
How the physicians, leaving pill and potion,
Prescribed, by way of blister, a young belle,
When old King David's blood grew dull in motion,
And that the medicine answer'd very well;
Perhaps 't was in a different way applied,
For David lived, but Juan nearly died.

CLXIX

What 's to be done? Alfonso will be back
The moment he has sent his fools away.
Antonia's skill was put upon the rack,
But no device could be brought into play —
And how to parry the renew'd attack?
Besides, it wanted but few hours of day:
Antonia puzzled; Julia did not speak,
But press'd her bloodless lip to Juan's cheek.

CLXX

He turn'd his lip to hers, and with his hand
Call'd back the tangles of her wandering hair;
Even then their love they could not all command,
And half forgot their danger and despair:
Antonia's patience now was at a stand —
'Come, come, 't is no time now for fooling there,'
She whisper'd, in great wrath — 'I must deposit
This pretty gentleman within the closet:

CLXXI

'Pray, keep your nonsense for some luckier night —
Who can have put my master in this mood?
What will become on 't — I 'm in such a fright,
The devil 's in the urchin, and no good —

Is this a time for giggling? this a plight?
Why, don't you know that it may end in blood?
You 'll lose your life, and I shall lose my place,
My mistress all, for that half-girlish face.

CLXXII

'Had it but been for a stout cavalier
Of twenty-five or thirty (come, make haste) —
But for a child, what piece of work is here!
I really, madam, wonder at your taste
(Come, sir, get in) — my master must be near:
There, for the present, at the least, he 's fast,
And if we can but till the morning keep
Our counsel — (Juan, mind, you must not sleep.)'

CLXXIII

Now, Don Alfonso entering, but alone,
Closed the oration of the trusty maid:
She loiter'd, and he told her to be gone,
An order somewhat sullenly obey'd;
However, present remedy was none,
And no great good seem'd answer'd if she staid:
Regarding both with slow and sidelong view,
She snuff'd the candle, curtsied, and withdrew.

CLXXIV

Alfonso paused a minute — then begun
Some strange excuses for his late proceeding;
He would not justify what he had done,
To say the best, it was extreme ill-breeding;
But there were ample reasons for it, none
Of which he specified in this his pleading:
His speech was a fine sample, on the whole,
Of rhetoric, which the learn'd call '*rigmarole.*'

CLXXV

Julia said nought; though all the while there rose
A ready answer, which at once enables
A matron, who her husband's foible knows,
By a few timely words to turn the tables,
Which, if it does not silence, still must pose, —
Even if it should comprise a pack of fables;
'T is to retort with firmness, and when he
Suspects with *one*, do you reproach with *three.*

CLXXVI

Julia, in fact, had tolerable grounds, —
Alfonso's loves with Inez were well known,
But whether 't was that one's own guilt confounds —
But that can't be, as has been often shown,
A lady with apologies abounds; —
It might be that her silence sprang alone
From delicacy to Don Juan's ear,
To whom she knew his mother's fame was dear.

CLXXVII

There might be one more motive, which makes two;
Alfonso ne'er to Juan had alluded, —
Mention'd his jealousy, but never who
Had been the happy lover, he concluded,
Conceal'd amongst his premises; 't is true,
His mind the more o'er this its mystery brooded;
To speak of Inez now were, one may say,
Like throwing Juan in Alfonso's way.

CLXXVIII

A hint, in tender cases, is enough;
Silence is best, besides there is a *tact*
(That modern phrase appears to me sad stuff,
But it will serve to keep my verse compact) —
Which keeps, when push'd by questions rather rough,
A lady always distant from the fact:
The charming creatures lie with such a grace,
There 's nothing so becoming to the face.

CLXXIX

They blush, and we believe them; at least I
Have always done so; 't is of no great use,
In any case, attempting a reply,
For then their eloquence grows quite profuse;

And when at length they 're out of breath, they sigh,
And cast their languid eyes down, and let loose
A tear or two, and then we make it up;
And then — and then — and then — sit down and sup.

CLXXX

Alfonso closed his speech, and begg'd her pardon,
Which Julia half withheld, and then half granted,
And laid conditions he thought very hard on,
Denying several little things he wanted:
He stood like Adam lingering near his garden,
With useless penitence perplex'd and haunted,
Beseeching she no further would refuse,
When, lo! he stumbled o'er a pair of shoes.

CLXXXI

A pair of shoes! — what then? not much, if they
Are such as fit with ladies' feet, but these
(No one can tell how much I grieve to say)
Were masculine; to see them, and to seize,
Was but a moment's act. — Ah! well-a-day!
My teeth begin to chatter, my veins freeze —
Alfonso first examined well their fashion,
And then flew out into another passion.

CLXXXII

He left the room for his relinquish'd sword,
And Julia instant to the closet flew.
'Fly, Juan, fly! for heaven's sake — not a word —
The door is open — you may yet slip through
The passage you so often have explored —
Here is the garden-key — Fly — fly — Adieu!
Haste — haste! I hear Alfonso's hurrying feet —
Day has not broke — there 's no one in the street.'

CLXXXIII

None can say that this was not good advice,
The only mischief was, it came too late;
Of all experience 't is the usual price,
A sort of income-tax laid on by fate:
Juan had reach'd the room-door in a trice,
And might have done so by the garden-gate,
But met Alfonso in his dressing-gown,
Who threaten'd death — so Juan knock'd him down.

CLXXXIV

Dire was the scuffle, and out went the light;
Antonia cried out 'Rape!' and Julia 'Fire!'
But not a servant stirr'd to aid the fight.
Alfonso, pommell'd to his heart's desire,
Swore lustily he 'd be revenged this night;
And Juan, too, blasphemed an octave higher;
His blood was up: though young, he was a Tartar,
And not at all disposed to prove a martyr.

CLXXXV

Alfonso's sword had dropp'd ere he could draw it,
And they continued battling hand to hand,
For Juan very luckily ne'er saw it;
His temper not being under great command,
If at that moment he had chanced to claw it,
Alfonso's days had not been in the land
Much longer. — Think of husbands', lovers' lives!
And how ye may be doubly widows — wives!

CLXXXVI

Alfonso grappled to detain the foe,
And Juan throttled him to get away,
And blood ('t was from the nose) began to flow;
At last, as they more faintly wrestling lay,
Juan contrived to give an awkward blow,
And then his only garment quite gave way;
He fled, like Joseph, leaving it; but there,
I doubt, all likeness ends between the pair.

CLXXXVII

Lights came at length, and men, and maids, who found
An awkward spectacle their eyes before;

Antonia in hysterics, Julia swoon'd,
Alfonso leaning, breathless, by the door;
Some half-torn drapery scatter'd on the ground,
Some blood, and several footsteps, but no more:
Juan the gate gain'd, turn'd the key about,
And liking not the inside, lock'd the out.

CLXXXVIII

Here ends this canto. — Need I sing, or say,
How Juan naked, favour'd by the night,
Who favours what she should not, found his way,
And reach'd his home in an unseemly plight?
The pleasant scandal which arose next day,
The nine days' wonder which was brought to light,
And how Alfonso sued for a divorce,
Were in the English newspapers, of course.

CLXXXIX

If you would like to see the whole proceedings,
The depositions, and the cause at full,
The names of all the witnesses, the pleadings
Of counsel to nonsuit, or to annul,
There 's more than one edition, and the readings
Are various, but they none of them are dull;
The best is that in short-hand ta'en by Gurney,
Who to Madrid on purpose made a journey.

CXC

But Donna Inez, to divert the train
Of one of the most circulating scandals
That had for centuries been known in Spain,
At least since the retirement of the Vandals,
First vow'd (and never had she vow'd in vain)
To Virgin Mary several pounds of candles;
And then, by the advice of some old ladies,
She sent her son to be shipp'd off from Cadiz.

CXCI

She had resolved that he should travel through
All European climes, by land or sea,
To mend his former morals, and get new,
Especially in France and Italy
(At least this is the thing most people do).
Julia was sent into a convent: she
Grieved, but, perhaps, her feelings may be better
Shown in the following copy of her Letter: —

CXCII

'They tell me 't is decided; you depart:
'T is wise — 't is well, but not the less a pain;
I have no further claim on your young heart,
Mine is the victim, and would be again;
To love too much has been the only art
I used; — I write in haste, and if a stain
Be on this sheet, 't is not what it appears;
My eyeballs burn and throb, but have no tears.

CXCIII

'I loved, I love you, for this love have lost
State, station, heaven, mankind's, my own esteem,
And yet can not regret what it hath cost,
So dear is still the memory of that dream;
Yet, if I name my guilt, 't is not to boast,
None can deem harshlier of me than I deem:
I trace this scrawl because I cannot rest —
I 've nothing to reproach, or to request.

CXCIV

'Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
'T is woman's whole existence; man may range
The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart;
Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange
Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
And few there are whom these cannot estrange;
Men have all these resources, we but one,
To love again, and be again undone.

CXCV

'You will proceed in pleasure, and in pride,
Beloved and loving many; all is o'er
For me on earth, except some years to hide
My shame and sorrow deep in my heart's core;

These I could bear, but cannot cast aside
The passion which still rages as before —
And so farewell — forgive me, love me — No,
That word is idle now — but let it go.

CXCVI

'My breast has been all weakness, is so yet;
But still I think I can collect my mind;
My blood still rushes where my spirit 's set,
As roll the waves before the settled wind;
My heart is feminine, nor can forget —
To all, except one image, madly blind;
So shakes the needle, and so stands the pole,
As vibrates my fond heart to my fix'd soul.

CXCVII

'I have no more to say, but linger still,
And dare not set my seal upon this sheet,
And yet I may as well the task fulfil,
My misery can scarce be more complete:
I had not lived till now, could sorrow kill;
Death shuns the wretch who fain the blow would meet,
And I must even survive this last adieu,
And bear with life, to love and pray for you!'

CXCVIII

This note was written upon gilt-edged paper
With a neat little crow-quill, slight and new:
Her small white hand could hardly reach the taper,
It trembled as magnetic needles do,
And yet she did not let one tear escape her;
The seal a sun-flower; '*Elle vous suit partout*,'
The motto cut upon a white cornelian;
The wax was superfine, its hue vermilion.

CXCIX

This was Don Juan's earliest scrape; but whether
I shall proceed with his adventures is
Dependent on the public altogether;
We 'll see, however, what they say to this:
Their favour in an author's cap 's a feather,
And no great mischief 's done by their caprice;
And if their approbation we experience,
Perhaps they 'll have some more about a year hence.

CC

My poem 's epic, and is meant to be
Divided in twelve books; each book containing,
With love, and war, a heavy gale at sea,
A list of ships, and captains, and kings reigning,
New characters; the episodes are three:
A panoramic view of hell 's in training,
After the style of Virgil and of Homer,
So that my name of Epic 's no misnomer.

CCI

All these things will be specified in time,
With strict regard to Aristotle's rules,
The *Vade Mecum* of the true sublime,
Which makes so many poets, and some fools:
Prose poets like blank-verse, I 'm fond of rhyme,
Good workmen never quarrel with their tools;
I 've got new mythological machinery,
And very handsome supernatural scenery.

CCII

There 's only one slight difference between
Me and my epic brethren gone before,
And here the advantage is my own, I ween
(Not that I have not several merits more,
But this will more peculiarly be seen);
They so embellish, that 't is quite a bore
Their labyrinth of fables to thread through,
Whereas this story 's actually true.

CCIII

If any person doubt it, I appeal
To history, tradition, and to facts,
To newspapers, whose truth all know and feel,
To plays in five, and operas in three acts;
All these confirm my statement a good deal,
But that which more completely faith exacts
Is that myself, and several now in Seville,
Saw Juan's last elopement with the devil.

CCIV

If ever I should condescend to prose,
I 'll write poetical commandments, which
Shall supersede beyond all doubt all those
That went before; in these I shall enrich

My text with many things that no one knows,
And carry precept to the highest pitch:
I 'll call the work 'Longinus o'er a Bottle,
Or, Every Poet his *own* Aristotle.'

CCV

Thou shalt believe in Milton, Dryden, Pope;
Thou shalt not set up Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey;
Because the first is crazed beyond all hope,
The second drunk, the third so quaint and mouthy:
With Crabbe it may be difficult to cope,
And Campbell's Hippocrene is somewhat drouthy:
Thou shalt not steal from Samuel Rogers, nor
Commit — flirtation with the muse of Moore.

CCVI

Thou shalt not covet Mr. Sotheby's Muse,
His Pegasus, nor anything that 's his;
Thou shalt not bear false witness like 'the Blues'
(There 's one, at least, is very fond of this);
Thou shalt not write, in short, but what I choose:
This is true criticism, and you may kiss —
Exactly as you please, or not, — the rod;
But if you don't, I 'll lay it on, by G—d!

CCVII

If any person should presume to assert
This story is not moral, first, I pray,
That they will not cry out before they 're hurt,
Then that they 'll read it o'er again, and say
(But, doubtless, nobody will be so pert)
That this is not a moral tale, though gay;
Besides, in Canto Twelfth, I mean to show
The very place where wicked people go.

CCVIII

If, after all, there should be some so blind
To their own good this warning to despise,
Led by some tortuosity of mind,
Not to believe my verse and their own eyes,
And cry that they 'the moral cannot find,'
I tell him, if a clergyman, he lies;
Should captains the remark, or critics, make,
They also lie too — under a mistake.

CCIX

The public approbation I expect,
And beg they 'll take my word about the moral,
Which I with their amusement will connect
(So children cutting teeth receive a coral);
Meantime, they 'll doubtless please to recollect
My epical pretensions to the laurel:
For fear some prudish readers should grow skittish,
I 've bribed my grandmother's review — the British.

CCX

I sent it in a letter to the Editor,
Who thank'd me duly by return of post —
I 'm for a handsome article his creditor;
Yet, if my gentle Muse he please to roast,
And break a promise after having made it her,
Denying the receipt of what it cost,
And smear his page with gall instead of honey,
All I can say is — that he had the money.

CCXI

I think that with this holy new alliance
I may ensure the public, and defy
All other magazines of art or science,
Daily, or monthly, or three monthly; I
Have not essay'd to multiply their clients,
Because they tell me 't were in vain to try,
And that the Edinburgh Review and Quarterly
Treat a dissenting author very martyrly.

CCXII

'*Non ego hoc ferrem calidâ juventâ*
Consule Planco,' Horace said, and so
Say I; by which quotation there is meant a
Hint that some six or seven good years ago
(Long ere I dreamt of dating from the Brenta)
I was most ready to return a blow,
And would not brook at all this sort of thing
In my hot youth — when George the Third was King.

CCXIII

But now at thirty years my hair is grey
(I wonder what it will be like at forty?
I thought of a peruke the other day) —
My heart is not much greener; and, in short, I
Have squander'd my whole summer while 't was May,
And feel no more the spirit to retort; I
Have spent my life, both interest and principal,
And deem not, what I deem'd, my soul invincible.

CCXIV

No more — no more — Oh! never more on me
The freshness of the heart can fall like dew,
Which out of all the lovely things we see
Extracts emotions beautiful and new,
Hived in our bosoms like the bag o' the bee:
Think'st thou the honey with those objects grew?
Alas! 't was not in them, but in thy power
To double even the sweetness of a flower.

CCXV

No more — no more — Oh! never more, my heart,
Canst thou be my sole world, my universe!
Once all in all, but now a thing apart,
Thou canst not be my blessing or my curse:
The illusion 's gone for ever, and thou art
Insensible, I trust, but none the worse,
And in thy stead I 've got a deal of judgment,
Though heaven knows how it ever found a lodgment.

CCXVI

My days of love are over; me no more
The charms of maid, wife, and still less of widow,
Can make the fool of which they made before, —
In short, I must not lead the life I did do;
The credulous hope of mutual minds is o'er,
The copious use of claret is forbid too,
So for a good old-gentlemanly vice,
I think I must take up with avarice.

CCXVII

Ambition was my idol, which was broken
Before the shrines of Sorrow, and of Pleasure;
And the two last have left me many a token
O'er which reflection may be made at leisure:
Now, like Friar Bacon's brazen head, I 've spoken,
'Time is, Time was, Time 's past:' — a chymic treasure
Is glittering youth, which I have spent betimes —
My heart in passion, and my head on rhymes.

CCXVIII

What is the end of Fame? 't is but to fill
A certain portion of uncertain paper:
Some liken it to climbing up a hill,
Whose summit, like all hills, is lost in vapour;
For this men write, speak, preach, and heroes kill,
And bards burn what they call their 'midnight taper,'
To have, when the original is dust,
A name, a wretched picture, and worse bust.

CCXIX

What are the hopes of man? Old Egypt's King
Cheops erected the first pyramid
And largest, thinking it was just the thing
To keep his memory whole, and mummy hid;
But somebody or other rummaging,
Burglariously broke his coffin's lid:
Let not a monument give you or me hopes,
Since not a pinch of dust remains of Cheops.

CCXX

But I being fond of true philosophy,
Say very often to myself, 'Alas!
All things that have been born were born to die,
And flesh (which Death mows down to hay) is grass;
You 've pass'd your youth not so unpleasantly,
And if you had it o'er again — 't would pass —
So thank your stars that matters are no worse,
And read your Bible, sir, and mind your purse.'

CCXXI

But for the present, gentle reader! and
Still gentler purchaser! the bard—that's I—
Must, with permission, shake you by the hand,
And so 'Your humble servant, and good-b'ye!'
We meet again, if we should understand
Each other; and if not, I shall not try
Your patience further than by this short sample—
'Twere well if others follow'd my example.

CCXXII

'Go, little book, from this my solitude!
I cast thee on the waters—go thy ways!
And if, as I believe, thy vein be good,
The world will find thee after many days.'
When Southey's read, and Wordsworth understood,
I can't help putting in my claim to praise—
The four first rhymes are Southey's every line:
For God's sake, reader! take them not for mine.

CANTO THE SECOND

I

Oh ye! who teach the ingenuous youth of nations,
Holland, France, England, Germany, or Spain,
I pray ye flog them upon all occasions,
It mends their morals, never mind the pain:
The best of mothers and of educations
In Juan's case were but employ'd in vain,
Since, in a way that's rather of the oddest, he
Became divested of his native modesty.

II

Had he but been placed at a public school,
In the third form, or even in the fourth,
His daily task had kept his fancy cool,
At least, had he been nurtured in the north;
Spain may prove an exception to the rule,
But then exceptions always prove its worth—
A lad of sixteen causing a divorce
Puzzled his tutors very much, of course.

III

I can't say that it puzzles me at all,
If all things be consider'd: first, there was
His lady-mother, mathematical,
A—never mind; his tutor, an old ass;
A pretty woman (that's quite natural,
Or else the thing had hardly come to pass);
A husband rather old, not much in unity
With his young wife—a time, and opportunity.

IV

Well—well, the world must turn upon its axis,
And all mankind turn with it, heads or tails,
And live and die, make love and pay our taxes,
And as the veering wind shifts, shift our sails;
The king commands us, and the doctor quacks us,
The priest instructs, and so our life exhales,
A little breath, love, wine, ambition, fame,
Fighting, devotion, dust,—perhaps a name.

V

I said that Juan had been sent to Cadiz—
A pretty town, I recollect it well—
'Tis there the mart of the colonial trade is
(Or was, before Peru learn'd to rebel),
And such sweet girls—I mean, such graceful ladies,
Their very walk would make your bosom swell;
I can't describe it, though so much it strike,
Nor liken it—I never saw the like:

VI

An Arab horse, a stately stag, a barb
New broke, a cameleopard, a gazelle,
No—none of these will do;—and then their garb!
Their veil and petticoat—Alas! to dwell
Upon such things would very near absorb
A canto—then their feet and ankles,—well,

Thank Heaven I 've got no metaphor quite ready
(And so, my sober Muse — come, let 's be steady —

VII

Chaste Muse ! — well, if you must, you must) — the veil
Thrown back a moment with the glancing hand,
While the o'erpowering eye, that turns you pale,
Flashes into the heart: — All sunny land
Of love ! when I forget you, may I fail
To — say my prayers — but never was there plann'd
A dress through which the eyes give such a volley,
Excepting the Venetian Fazzioli.

VIII

But to our tale: the Donna Inez sent
Her son to Cadiz only to embark;
To stay there had not answer'd her intent,
But why ? — we leave the reader in the dark —
'T was for a voyage that the young man was meant,
As if a Spanish ship were Noah's ark,
To wean him from the wickedness of earth,
And send him like a dove of promise forth.

IX

Don Juan bade his valet pack his things
According to direction, then received
A lecture and some money: for four springs
He was to travel; and though Inez grieved
(As every kind of parting has its stings),
She hoped he would improve — perhaps believed:
A letter, too, she gave (he never read it)
Of good advice — and two or three of credit.

X

In the mean time, to pass her hours away,
Brave Inez now set up a Sunday school
For naughty children, who would rather play
(Like truant rogues) the devil, or the fool;
Infants of three years old were taught that day,
Dunces were whipt, or set upon a stool:
The great success of Juan's education,
Spurr'd her to teach another generation.

XI

Juan embark'd — the ship got under way,
The wind was fair, the water passing rough:
A devil of a sea rolls in that bay,
As I, who 've cross'd it oft, know well enough;
And, standing upon deck, the dashing spray
Flies in one's face, and makes it weather-tough:
And there he stood to take, and take again,
His first — perhaps his last — farewell of Spain.

XII

I can't but say it is an awkward sight
To see one's native land receding through
The growing waters; it unmans one quite,
Especially when life is rather new:
I recollect Great Britain's coast looks white,
But almost every other country 's blue,
When gazing on them, mystified by distance,
We enter on our nautical existence.

XIII

So Juan stood, bewilder'd on the deck:
The wind sung, cordage strain'd, and sailors swore,
And the ship creak'd, the town became a speck,
From which away so fair and fast they bore.
The best of remedies is a beef-steak
Against sea-sickness: try it, sir, before
You sneer, and I assure you this is true,
For I have found it answer — so may you.

XIV

Don Juan stood, and, gazing from the stern,
Beheld his native Spain receding far:
First partings form a lesson hard to learn,
Even nations feel this when they go to war;
There is a sort of unexprest concern,
A kind of shock that sets one's heart ajar:
At leaving even the most unpleasant people
And places, one keeps looking at the steeple

XV

But Juan had got many things to leave,
His mother, and a mistress, and no wife,
So that he had much better cause to grieve
Than many persons more advanced in life;
And if we now and then a sigh must heave
At quitting even those we quit in strife,
No doubt we weep for those the heart endears — 119
That is, till deeper griefs congeal our tears.

XVI

So Juan wept, as wept the captive Jews
By Babel's waters, still remembering Sion:
I 'd weep, — but mine is not a weeping Muse,
And such light griefs are not a thing to die on;
Young men should travel, if but to amuse
Themselves; and the next time their servants tie on
Behind their carriages their new portmanteau,
Perhaps it may be lined with this my canto.

XVII

And Juan wept, and much he sigh'd and thought,
While his salt tears dropp'd into the salt sea, 130
'Sweets to the sweet' (I like so much to quote;
You must excuse this extract, 't is where she,
The Queen of Denmark, for Ophelia brought
Flowers to the grave); and, sobbing often, he
Reflected on his present situation,
And seriously resolved on reformation.

XVIII

'Farewell, my Spain! a long farewell!' he cried,
'Perhaps I may revisit thee no more,
But die, as many an exiled heart hath died,
Of its own thirst to see again thy shore:
Farewell, where Guadalquivir's waters glide! 141
Farewell, my mother! and, since all is o'er,
Farewell, too, dearest Julia! — (Here he drew
Her letter out again, and read it through.)

XIX

'And, oh! if e'er I should forget, I swear —
But that 's impossible, and cannot be —
Sooner shall this blue ocean melt to air,
Sooner shall earth resolve itself to sea,
Than I resign thine image, oh, my fair!
Or think of any thing excepting thee; 150
A mind diseased no remedy can physic
(Here the ship gave a lurch, and he grew sea-sick).

XX

'Sooner shall heaven kiss earth (here he fell sicker),
Oh, Julia! what is every other wo?
(For God's sake let me have a glass of liquor;
Pedro, Battista, help me down below.)
Julia, my love! (you rascal, Pedro, quicker) —
Oh, Julia! (this curst vessel pitches so) —
Beloved Julia, hear me still beseeching!'
(Here he grew inarticulate with retching.)

XXI

He felt that chilling heaviness of heart, 161
Or rather stomach, which, alas! attends,
Beyond the best apothecary's art,
The loss of love, the treachery of friends,
Or death of those we dote on, when a part
Of us dies with them as each fond hope ends:
No doubt he would have been much more pathetic,
But the sea acted as a strong emetic.

XXII

Love 's a capricious power: I 've known it hold
Out through a fever caused by its own heat, 170
But be much puzzled by a cough and cold,
And find a quinsy very hard to treat;
Against all noble maladies he 's bold,
But vulgar illnesses don't like to meet,
Nor that a sneeze should interrupt his sigh,
Nor inflammations redden his blind eye.

XXIII

But worst of all is nausea, or a pain
About the lower region of the bowels;
Love, who heroically breathes a vein,
Shrinks from the application of hot towels, 180

And purgatives are dangerous to his reign,
Sea-sickness death: his love was perfect, how else
Could Juan's passion, while the billows roar,
Resist his stomach, ne'er at sea before?

XXIV

The ship, call'd the most holy 'Trinidada,'
Was steering duly for the port Leghorn;
For there the Spanish family Moncada
Were settled long ere Juan's sire was born:
They were relations, and for them he had a
Letter of introduction, which the morn
Of his departure had been sent him by
His Spanish friends for those in Italy.

XXV

His suite consisted of three servants and
A tutor, the licentiate Pedrillo,
Who several languages did understand,
But now lay sick and speechless on his pillow,
And rocking in his hammock, long'd for land,
His headache being increased by every billow;
And the waves oozing through the port-hole made
His berth a little damp, and him afraid.

XXVI

'T was not without some reason, for the wind
Increased at night, until it blew a gale;
And though 't was not much to a naval mind,
Some landsmen would have look'd a little pale,
For sailors are, in fact, a different kind:
At sunset they began to take in sail,
For the sky show'd it would come on to blow,
And carry away, perhaps, a mast or so.

XXVII

At one o'clock the wind with sudden shift
Threw the ship right into the trough of the sea,
Which struck her aft, and made an awkward rift,
Started the stern-post, also shatter'd the
Whole of her stern-frame, and, ere she could lift
Herself from out her present jeopardy,
The rudder tore away: 't was time to sound
The pumps, and there were four feet water found.

XXVIII

One gang of people instantly was put
Upon the pumps and the remainder set
To get up part of the cargo, and what not;
But they could not come at the leak as yet;
At last they did get at it really, but
Still their salvation was an even bet:
The water rush'd through in a way quite puzzling,
While they thrust sheets, shirts, jackets, bales of muslin,

XXIX

Into the opening; but all such ingredients
Would have been vain, and they must have gone down,
Despite of all their efforts and expedients,
But for the pumps: I 'm glad to make them known
To all the brother tars who may have need hence,
For fifty tons of water were upthrown
By them per hour, and they had all been undone,
But for the maker, Mr. Mann, of London.

XXX

As day advanced the weather seem'd to abate,
And then the leak they reckon'd to reduce,
And keep the ship afloat, though three feet yet
Kept two hand and one chain-pump still in use.
The wind blew fresh again: as it grew late
A squall came on, and while some guns broke loose,
A gust — which all descriptive power transcends —
Laid with one blast the ship on her beam ends.

XXXI

There she lay motionless, and seem'd upset;
The water left the hold, and wash'd the decks,
And made a scene men do not soon forget;
For they remember battles, fires, and wrecks,

Or any other thing that brings regret,
Or breaks their hopes, or hearts, or heads, or necks:
Thus drownings are much talk'd of by the divers,
And swimmers, who may chance to be survivors.

XXXII

Immediately the masts were cut away,
Both main and mizen; first the mizen went,
The main-mast follow'd: but the ship still lay
Like a mere log, and baffled our intent.
Foremast and bowsprit were cut down, and they
Eased her at last (although we never meant
To part with all till every hope was blighted),
And then with violence the old ship righted.

XXXIII

It may be easily supposed, while this
Was going on, some people were unquiet,
That passengers would find it much amiss
To lose their lives, as well as spoil their diet;
That even the able seaman, deeming his
Days nearly o'er, might be disposed to riot,
As upon such occasions tars will ask
For grog, and sometimes drink rum from the cask.

XXXIV

There 's nought, no doubt, so much the spirit calms
As rum and true religion: thus it was,
Some plunder'd, some drank spirits, some sung psalms,
The high wind made the treble, and as bass
The hoarse harsh waves kept time; fright cured the qualms
Of all the luckless landsmen's sea-sick maws:
Strange sounds of wailing, blasphemy, devotion,
Clamour'd in chorus to the roaring ocean.

XXXV

Perhaps more mischief had been done, but for
Our Juan, who, with sense beyond his years,
Got to the spirit-room, and stood before
It with a pair of pistols; and their fears,
As if Death were more dreadful by his door
Of fire than water, spite of oaths and tears,
Kept still aloof the crew, who, ere they sunk,
Thought it would be becoming to die drunk.

XXXVI

'Give us more grog,' they cried, 'for it will be
All one an hour hence.' Juan answer'd, 'No!
'T is true that death awaits both you and me,
But let us die like men, not sink below
Like brutes;' — and thus his dangerous post kept he,
And none liked to anticipate the blow;
And even Pedrillo, his most reverend tutor,
Was for some rum a disappointed suitor.

XXXVII

The good old gentleman was quite aghast,
And made a loud and pious lamentation;
Repented all his sins, and made a last
Irrevocable vow of reformation;
Nothing should tempt him more (this peril past)
To quit his academic occupation,
In cloisters of the classic Salamanca,
To follow Juan's wake, like Sancho Panca.

XXXVIII

But now there came a flash of hope once more;
Day broke, and the wind lull'd: the masts were gone,
The leak increased; shoals round her, but no shore,
The vessel swam, yet still she held her own.
They tried the pumps again, and though before
Their desperate efforts seem'd all useless grown,
A glimpse of sunshine set some hands to bale —
The stronger pump'd, the weaker thrumm'd a sail.

XXXIX

Under the vessel's keel the sail was past,
And for the moment it had some effect;
But with a leak, and not a stick of mast,
Nor rag of canvas, what could they expect?

But still 't is best to struggle to the last,
'T is never too late to be wholly wreck'd:
And though 't is true that man can only die once,
'T is not so pleasant in the Gulf of Lyons.

XL

There winds and waves had hurl'd them, and from thence,
Without their will, they carried them away;
For they were forced with steering to dispense,
And never had as yet a quiet day
On which they might repose, or even commence
A jurymast or rudder, or could say
The ship would swim an hour, which, by good luck,
Still swam — though not exactly like a duck.

XLI

The wind, in fact, perhaps was rather less,
But the ship labour'd so, they scarce could hope
To weather out much longer; the distress
Was also great with which they had to cope
For want of water, and their solid mess
Was scant enough: in vain the telescope
Was used — nor sail nor shore appear'd in sight,
Nought but the heavy sea, and coming night.

XLII

Again the weather threaten'd, — again blew
A gale, and in the fore and after hold
Water appear'd; yet, though the people knew
All this, the most were patient, and some bold,
Until the chains and leathers were worn through
Of all our pumps: — a wreck complete she roll'd,
At mercy of the waves, whose mercies are
Like human beings during civil war.

XLIII

Then came the carpenter, at last, with tears
In his rough eyes, and told the captain he
Could do no more: he was a man in years,
And long had voyaged through many a stormy sea,
And if he wept at length, they were not fears
That made his eyelids as a woman's be,
But he, poor fellow, had a wife and children, —
Two things for dying people quite bewildering.

XLIV

The ship was evidently settling now
Fast by the head; and, all distinction gone,
Some went to prayers again, and made a vow
Of candles to their saints — but there were none
To pay them with; and some look'd o'er the bow;
Some hoisted out the boats; and there was one
That begg'd Pedrillo for an absolution,
Who told him to be damn'd — in his confusion.

XLV

Some lash'd them in their hammocks; some put on
Their best clothes, as if going to a fair;
Some cursed the day on which they saw the sun,
And gnash'd their teeth, and, howling, tore their hair;
And others went on as they had begun,
Getting the boats out, being well aware
That a tight boat will live in a rough sea,
Unless with breakers close beneath her lee.

XLVI

The worst of all was, that in their condition,
Having been several days in great distress,
'T was difficult to get out such provision
As now might render their long suffering less:
Men, even when dying, dislike inanition;
Their stock was damaged by the weather's stress:
Two casks of biscuit and a keg of butter
Were all that could be thrown into the cutter.

XLVII

But in the long-boat they contrived to stow
Some pounds of bread, though injured by the wet;

Water, a twenty-gallon cask or so;
Six flasks of wine; and they contrived to get
A portion of their beef up from below,
And with a piece of pork, moreover, met,
But scarce enough to serve them for a luncheon —
Then there was rum, eight gallons in a puncheon.

XLVIII

The other boats, the yawl and pinnace, had
Been stove in the beginning of the gale;
And the long-boat's condition was but bad,
As there were but two blankets for a sail,
And one oar for a mast, which a young lad
Threw in by good luck over the ship's rail;
And two boats could not hold, far less be stored,
To save one half the people then on board.

XLIX

'Twas twilight, and the sunless day went down
Over the waste of waters; like a veil,
Which, if withdrawn, would but disclose the frown
Of one whose hate is mask'd but to assail.
Thus to their hopeless eyes the night was shown,
And grimly darkled o'er the faces pale,
And the dim desolate deep: twelve days had Fear
Been their familiar, and now Death was here.

L

Some trial had been making at a raft,
With little hope in such a rolling sea,
A sort of thing at which one would have laugh'd,
If any laughter at such times could be,
Unless with people who too much have quaff'd,
And have a kind of wild and horrid glee,
Half epileptical and half hysterical: —
Their preservation would have been a miracle.

LI

At half-past eight o'clock, booms, hencoops, spars,
And all things, for a chance, had been cast loose,
That still could keep afloat the struggling tars,
For yet they strove, although of no great use:
There was no light in heaven but a few stars,
The boats put off o'ercrowded with their crews;
She gave a heel, and then a lurch to port,
And, going down head foremost — sunk, in short.

LII

Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell —
Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still the brave,
Then some leap'd overboard with dreadful yell,
As eager to anticipate their grave;
And the sea yawn'd around her like a hell,
And down she suck'd with her the whirling wave,
Like one who grapples with his enemy,
And strives to strangle him before he die.

LIII

And first one universal shriek there rush'd,
Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash
Of echoing thunder; and then all was hush'd,
Save the wild wind and the remorseless dash
Of billows; but at intervals there gush'd,
Accompanied with a convulsive splash,
A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry
Of some strong swimmer in his agony.

LIV

The boats, as stated, had got off before,
And in them crowded several of the crew;
And yet their present hope was hardly more
Than what it had been, for so strong it blew
There was slight chance of reaching any shore;
And then they were too many, though so few —

Nine in the cutter, thirty in the boat,
Were counted in them when they got afloat.

LV

All the rest perish'd; near two hundred souls
Had left their bodies; and what 's worse, alas !
When over Catholics the ocean rolls,
They must wait several weeks before a mass
Takes off one peck of purgatorial coals,
Because, till people know what 's come to pass,
They won't lay out their money on the dead —
It costs three francs for every mass that 's said.

LVI

Juan got into the long-boat, and there
Contrived to help Pedrillo to a place;
It seem'd as if they had exchanged their care,
For Juan wore the magisterial face
Which courage gives, while poor Pedrillo's pair
Of eyes were crying for their owner's case:
Battista, though (a name call'd shortly Tita),
Was lost by getting at some aqua-vita.

LVII

Pedro, his valet, too, he tried to save,
But the same cause, conducive to his loss,
Left him so drunk, he jump'd into the wave
As o'er the cutter's edge he tried to cross,
And so he found a wine-and-watery grave;
They could not rescue him although so close,
Because the sea ran higher every minute,
And for the boat — the crew kept crowding in it.

LVIII

A small old spaniel, — which had been Don José's,
His father's, whom he loved, as ye may think,
For on such things the memory reposes
With tenderness — stood howling on the brink,
Knowing (dogs have such intellectual noses !),
No doubt, the vessel was about to sink;
And Juan caught him up, and ere he stepp'd
Off, threw him in, then after him he leap'd.

LIX

He also stuff'd his money where he could
About his person, and Pedrillo's too,
Who let him do, in fact, whate'er he would,
Not knowing what himself to say, or do,
As every rising wave his dread renew'd;
But Juan, trusting they might still get through,
And deeming there were remedies for any ill,
Thus re-embark'd his tutor and his spaniel.

LX

'T was a rough night, and blew so stiffly yet,
That the sail was becalm'd between the seas,
Though on the wave's high top too much to set,
They dared not take it in for all the breeze:
Each sea curl'd o'er the stern, and kept them wet,
And made them bale without a moment's ease,
So that themselves as well as hopes were damp'd,
And the poor little cutter quickly swamp'd.

LXI

Nine souls more went in her: the long-boat still
Kept above water, with an oar for mast,
Two blankets stitch'd together, answering ill
Instead of sail, were to the oar made fast:
Though every wave roll'd menacing to fill,
And present peril all before surpass'd,
They grieved for those who perish'd with the cutter,
And also for the biscuit-casks and butter.

LXII

The sun rose red and fiery, a sure sign
Of the continuance of the gale: to run
Before the sea until it should grow fine,
Was all that for the present could be done:
A few tea-spoonfuls of their rum and wine
Were served out to the people, who begun

To faint, and damaged bread wet through the bags,
And most of them had little clothes but rags.

LXIII

They counted thirty, crowded in a space
Which left scarce room for motion or exertion;
They did their best to modify their case,
One half sate up, though numb'd with the immersion,
While t'other half were laid down in their place
At watch and watch; thus, shivering like the tertian
Ague in its cold fit, they fill'd their boat,
With nothing but the sky for a great coat.

LXIV

'T is very certain the desire of life
Prolongs it: this is obvious to physicians,
When patients, neither plagued with friends nor wife,
Survive through very desperate conditions,
Because they still can hope, nor shines the knife
Nor shears of Atropos before their visions:
Despair of all recovery spoils longevity,
And makes men's miseries of alarming brevity.

LXV

'T is said that persons living on annuities
Are longer lived than others,— God knows why,
Unless to plague the grantors,— yet so true it is,
That some, I really think, *do* never die;
Of any creditors the worst a Jew it is,
And *that* 's their mode of furnishing supply:
In my young days they lent me cash that way,
Which I found very troublesome to pay.

LXVI

'T is thus with people in an open boat,
They live upon the love of life, and bear
More than can be believed, or even thought,
And stand like rocks the tempest's wear and tear;
And hardship still has been the sailor's lot,
Since Noah's ark went cruising here and there;
She had a curious crew as well as cargo,
Like the first old Greek privateer, the Argo.

LXVII

But man is a carnivorous production,
And must have meals, at least one meal a day;
He cannot live, like woodcocks, upon suction,
But, like the shark and tiger, must have prey;
Although his anatomical construction
Bears vegetables, in a grumbling way,
Your labouring people think beyond all question,
Beef, veal, and mutton, better for digestion.

LXVIII

And thus it was with this our hapless crew;
For on the third day there came on a calm,
And though at first their strength it might renew,
And lying on their weariness like balm,
Lull'd them like turtles sleeping on the blue
Of ocean, when they woke they felt a qualm,
And fell all ravenously on their provision,
Instead of hoarding it with due precision.

LXIX

The consequence was easily foreseen —
They ate up all they had, and drank their wine,
In spite of all remonstrances, and then
On what, in fact, next day were they to dine?
They hoped the wind would rise, these foolish men!
And carry them to shore; these hopes were fine,
But as they had but one oar, and that brittle,
It would have been more wise to save their victual.

LXX

The fourth day came, but not a breath of air,
And Ocean slumber'd like an unwean'd child:
The fifth day, and their boat lay floating there,
The sea and sky were blue, and clear, and mild —

With their one oar (I wish they had had a pair)
What could they do? and hunger's rage grew wild:
So Juan's spaniel, spite of his entreating,
Was kill'd and portion'd out for present eating.

LXXI

On the sixth day they fed upon his hide,
And Juan, who had still refused, because
The creature was his father's dog that died,
Now feeling all the vulture in his jaws,
With some remorse received (though first denied)
As a great favour one of the fore-paws,
Which he divided with Pedrillo, who
Devour'd it, longing for the other too.

LXXII

The seventh day, and no wind — the burning sun
Blister'd and scorch'd, and, stagnant on the sea,
They lay like carcasses; and hope was none,
Save in the breeze that came not; savagely
They glared upon each other — all was done,
Water, and wine, and food, — and you might see
The longings of the cannibal arise
(Although they spoke not) in their wolfish eyes.

LXXIII

At length one whisper'd his companion, who
Whisper'd another, and thus it went round,
And then into a hoarser murmur grew,
An ominous, and wild, and desperate sound;
And when his comrade's thought each sufferer knew,
'T was but his own, suppress'd till now, he found:
And out they spoke of lots for flesh and blood,
And who should die to be his fellow's food.

LXXIV

But ere they came to this, they that day shared
Some leathern caps, and what remain'd of shoes;
And then they look'd around them and despair'd,
And none to be the sacrifice would choose;
At length the lots were torn up, and prepared,
But of materials that much shock the Muse —
Having no paper, for the want of better,
They took by force from Juan Julia's letter.

LXXV

The lots were made, and mark'd, and mix'd, and handed,
In silent horror, and their distribution
Lull'd even the savage hunger which demanded,
Like the Promethean vulture, this pollution;
None in particular had sought or plann'd it,
'T was nature gnaw'd them to this resolution,
By which none were permitted to be neuter —
And the lot fell on Juan's luckless tutor.

LXXVI

He but requested to be bled to death:
The surgeon had his instruments, and bled
Pedrillo, and so gently ebb'd his breath,
You hardly could perceive when he was dead.
He died as born, a Catholic in faith,
Like most in the belief in which they 're bred,
And first a little crucifix he kiss'd,
And then held out his jugular and wrist.

LXXVII

The surgeon, as there was no other fee,
Had his first choice of morsels for his pains;
But being thirstiest at the moment, he
Preferr'd a draught from the fast-flowing veins:
Part was divided, part thrown in the sea,
And such things as the entrails and the brains
Regaled two sharks, who follow'd o'er the billow —
The sailors ate the rest of poor Pedrillo.

LXXVIII

The sailors ate him, all save three or four,
Who were not quite so fond of animal food;
To these was added Juan, who, before
Refusing his own spaniel, hardly could

Feel now his appetite increased much more;
'T was not to be expected that he should,
Even in extremity of their disaster,
Dine with them on his pastor and his master.

LXXIX

'T was better that he did not; for, in fact,
The consequence was awful in the extreme;
For they, who were most ravenous in the act,
Went raging mad — Lord! how they did blaspheme!
And foam and roll, with strange convulsions rack'd,
Drinking salt-water like a mountain-stream,
Tearing, and grinning, howling, screeching, swearing,
And, with hyæna-laughter, died despairing.

LXXX

Their numbers were much thinn'd by this infliction,
And all the rest were thin enough, Heaven knows;
And some of them had lost their recollection,
Happier than they who still perceived their woes;
But others ponder'd on a new dissection,
As if not warn'd sufficiently by those
Who had already perish'd, suffering madly,
For having used their appetites so sadly.

LXXXI

And next they thought upon the master's mate,
As fattest; but he saved himself, because,
Besides being much averse from such a fate,
There were some other reasons: the first was,
He had been rather indisposed of late;
And that which chiefly proved his saving clause
Was a small present made to him at Cadiz,
By general subscription of the ladies.

LXXXII

Of poor Pedrillo something still remain'd,
But was used sparingly, — some were afraid,
And others still their appetites constrain'd,
Or but at times a little supper made;
All except Juan, who throughout abstain'd,
Chewing a piece of bamboo and some lead:
At length they caught two boobies and a noddy,
And then they left off eating the dead body.

LXXXIII

And if Pedrillo's fate should shocking be,
Remember Ugolino condescends
To eat the head of his arch-enemy
The moment after he politely ends
His tale: if foes be food in hell, at sea
'T is surely fair to dine upon our friends,
When shipwreck's short allowance grows too scanty,
Without being much more horrible than Dante.

LXXXIV

And the same night there fell a shower of rain,
For which their mouths gaped, like the cracks of earth
When dried to summer dust; till taught by pain
Men really know not what good water 's worth;
If you had been in Turkey or in Spain,
Or with a famish'd boat's-crew had your berth,
Or in the desert heard the camel's bell,
You 'd wish yourself where Truth is — in a well.

LXXXV

It pour'd down torrents, but they were no richer
Until they found a ragged piece of sheet,
Which served them as a sort of spongy pitcher,
And when they deem'd its moisture was complete
They wrung it out, and though a thirsty ditcher
Might not have thought the scanty draught so sweet
As a full pot of porter, to their thinking
They ne'er till now had known the joys of drinking.

LXXXVI

And their baked lips, with many a bloody crack,
Suck'd in the moisture, which like nectar stream'd.

Their throats were ovens, their swoln tongues were black,
As the rich man's in hell, who vainly scream'd
To beg the beggar, who could not rain back
A drop of dew, when every drop had seem'd
To taste of heaven — If this be true, indeed
Some Christians have a comfortable creed.

LXXXVII

There were two fathers in this ghastly crew,
And with them their two sons, of whom the one
Was more robust and hardy to the view,
But he died early; and when he was gone,
His nearest messmate told his sire, who threw
One glance at him, and said, 'Heaven's will be done!
I can do nothing,' and he saw him thrown
Into the deep without a tear or groan.

LXXXVIII

The other father had a weaklier child,
Of a soft cheek and aspect delicate;
But the boy bore up long, and with a mild
And patient spirit held aloof his fate;
Little he said, and now and then he smiled,
As if to win a part from off the weight
He saw increasing on his father's heart,
With the deep deadly thought that they must part.

LXXXIX

And o'er him bent his sire, and never raised
His eyes from off his face, but wiped the foam
From his pale lips, and ever on him gazed,
And when the wish'd-for shower at length was come,
And the boy's eyes, which the dull film half glazed,
Brighten'd, and for a moment seem'd to roam,
He squeezed from out a rag some drops of rain
Into his dying child's mouth — but in vain.

XC

The boy expired — the father held the clay,
And look'd upon it long, and when at last
Death left no doubt, and the dead burthen lay
Stiff on his heart, and pulse and hope were past,
He watch'd it wistfully, until away
'T was borne by the rude wave wherein 't was cast;
Then he himself sunk down all dumb and shivering,
And gave no sign of life, save his limbs quivering.

XCI

Now overhead a rainbow, bursting through
The scattering clouds, shone, spanning the dark sea,
Resting its bright base on the quivering blue;
And all within its arch appear'd to be
Clearer than that without, and its wide hue
Wax'd broad and waving, like a banner free,
Then changed like to a bow that's bent, and then
Forsook the dim eyes of these shipwreck'd men.

XCII

It changed, of course; a heavenly chameleon,
The airy child of vapour and the sun,
Brought forth in purple, cradled in vermilion,
Baptized in molten gold, and swathed in dun,
Glittering like crescents o'er a Turk's pavilion,
And blending every colour into one,
Just like a black eye in a recent scuffle
(For sometimes we must box without the muffle).

XCIII

Our shipwreck'd seamen thought it a good omen —
It is as well to think so, now and then;
'T was an old custom of the Greek and Roman,
And may become of great advantage when
Folks are discouraged; and most surely no men
Had greater need to nerve themselves again
Than these, and so this rainbow look'd like hope —
Quite a celestial kaleidoscope.

XCIV

About this time a beautiful white bird,
Webfooted, not unlike a dove in size
And plumage (probably it might have err'd
Upon its course), pass'd oft before their eyes,
And tried to perch, although it saw and heard
The men within the boat, and in this guise
It came and went, and flutter'd round them till
Night fell: this seem'd a better omen still.

XCV

But in this case I also must remark,
'T was well this bird of promise did not perch,
Because the tackle of our shatter'd bark
Was not so safe for roosting as a church;
And had it been the dove from Noah's ark,
Returning there from her successful search,
Which in their way that moment chanced to fall,
They would have eat her, olive-branch and all.

XCVI

With twilight it again came on to blow,
But not with violence; the stars shone out,
The boat made way; yet now they were so low,
They knew not where nor what they were about;
Some fancied they saw land, and some said 'No!'
The frequent fog-banks gave them cause to doubt —
Some swore that they heard breakers, others guns,
And all mistook about the latter once.

XCVII

As morning broke, the light wind died away,
When he who had the watch sung out and swore,
If 't was not land that rose with the sun's ray,
He wish'd that land he never might see more;
And the rest rubb'd their eyes and saw a bay,
Or thought they saw, and shaped their course for shore;
For shore it was, and gradually grew
Distinct, and high, and palpable to view.

XCVIII

And then of these some part burst into tears,
And others, looking with a stupid stare,
Could not yet separate their hopes from fears,
And seem'd as if they had no further care;
While a few pray'd (the first time for some years) —
And at the bottom of the boat three were
Asleep: they shook them by the hand and head,
And tried to awaken them, but found them dead.

XCIX

The day before, fast sleeping on the water
They found a turtle of the hawk's-bill kind,
And by good fortune, gliding softly, caught her,
Which yielded a day's life, and to their mind
Proved even still a more nutritious matter,
Because it left encouragement behind:
They thought that in such perils, more than chance
Had sent them this for their deliverance.

C

The land appear'd a high and rocky coast,
And higher grew the mountains as they drew,
Set by a current, toward it: they were lost
In various conjectures, for none knew
To what part of the earth they had been tost,
So changeable had been the winds that blew;
Some thought it was Mount Ætna, some the highlands,
Of Candia, Cyprus, Rhodes, or other islands.

CI

Meantime the current, with a rising gale,
Still set them onwards to the welcome shore,
Like Charon's bark of spectres, dull and pale:
Their living freight was now reduced to four,

And three dead, whom their strength could not avail
To heave into the deep with those before,
Though the two sharks still follow'd them, and dash'd
The spray into their faces as they splash'd.

CII

Famine, despair, cold, thirst, and heat, had done
Their work on them by turns, and thinn'd them to
Such things a mother had not known her son
Amidst the skeletons of that gaunt crew;
By night chill'd, by day scorch'd, thus one by one
They perish'd, until wither'd to these few,
But chiefly by a species of self-slaughter,
In washing down Pedrillo with salt water.

CIII

As they drew nigh the land, which now was seen
Unequal in its aspect here and there,
They felt the freshness of its growing green,
That waved in forest-tops, and smooth'd the air,
And fell upon their glazed eyes like a screen
From glistening waves, and skies so hot and bare —
Lovely seem'd any object that should sweep
Away the vast, salt, dread, eternal deep.

CIV

The shore look'd wild, without a trace of man,
And girt by formidable waves; but they
Were mad for land, and thus their course they ran,
Though right ahead the roaring breakers lay:
A reef between them also now began
To show its boiling surf and bounding spray,
But finding no place for their landing better,
They ran the boat for shore, — and overset her.

CV

But in his native stream, the Guadalquivir,
Juan to lave his youthful limbs was wont;
And having learnt to swim in that sweet river,
Had often turn'd the art to some account:
A better swimmer you could scarce see ever,
He could, perhaps, have pass'd the Hellespont,
As once (a feat on which ourselves we prided)
Leander, Mr. Ekenhead, and I did.

CVI

So here, though faint, emaciated, and stark,
He buoy'd his boyish limbs, and strove to ply
With the quick wave, and gain, ere it was dark,
The beach which lay before him, high and dry:
The greatest danger here was from a shark,
That carried off his neighbour by the thigh;
As for the other two, they could not swim,
So nobody arrived on shore but him.

CVII

Nor yet had he arrived but for the oar,
Which, providentially for him, was wash'd
Just as his feeble arms could strike no more,
And the hard wave o'erwhelm'd him as 't was dash'd
Within his grasp; he clung to it, and sore
The waters beat while he thereto was lash'd;
At last, with swimming, wading, scrambling, he
Roll'd on the beach, half-senseless, from the sea:

CVIII

There, breathless, with his digging nails he clung
Fast to the sand, lest the returning wave,
From whose reluctant roar his life he wrung,
Should suck him back to her insatiate grave:
And there he lay, full length, where he was flung,
Before the entrance of a cliff-worn cave,
With just enough of life to feel its pain,
And deem that it was saved, perhaps in vain.

CIX

With slow and staggering effort he arose,
But sunk again upon his bleeding knee
And quivering hand; and then he look'd for those
Who long had been his mates upon the sea;
But none of them appear'd to share his woes,
Save one, a corpse, from out the famish'd three,
Who died two days before, and now had found
An unknown barren beach for burial ground.

CX

And as he gazed, his dizzy brain spun fast,
And down he sunk; and as he sunk, the sand
Swam round and round, and all his senses pass'd:
He fell upon his side, and his stretch'd hand
Droop'd dripping on the oar (their jury-mast),
And, like a wither'd lily, on the land
His slender frame and pallid aspect lay,
As fair a thing as e'er was form'd of clay.

CXI

How long in his damp trance young Juan lay
He knew not, for the earth was gone for him,
And Time had nothing more of night nor day
For his congealing blood, and senses dim;
And how this heavy faintness pass'd away
He knew not, till each painful pulse and limb,
And tingling vein, seem'd throbbing back to life,
For Death, though vanquish'd, still retired with strife.

CXII

His eyes he open'd, shut, again unclosed,
For all was doubt and dizziness; he thought
He still was in the boat and had but dozed,
And felt again with his despair o'erwrought,
And wish'd it death in which he had reposed;
And then once more his feelings back were brought,
And slowly by his swimming eyes was seen
A lovely female face of seventeen.

CXIII

'T was bending close o'er his, and the small mouth
Seem'd almost prying into his for breath;
And chafing him, the soft warm hand of youth
Recall'd his answering spirits back from death;
And, bathing his chill temples, tried to soothe
Each pulse to animation, till beneath
Its gentle touch and trembling care, a sigh
To these kind efforts made a low reply.

CXIV

Then was the cordial pour'd, and mantle flung
Around his scarce-clad limbs; and the fair arm
Raised higher the faint head which o'er it hung;
And her transparent cheek, all pure and warm,
Pillow'd his death-like forehead; then she wrung
His dewy curls, long drench'd by every storm;
And watch'd with eagerness each throb that drew
A sigh from his heaved bosom — and hers, too.

CXV

And lifting him with care into the cave,
The gentle girl and her attendant, — one
Young, yet her elder, and of brow less grave,
And more robust of figure, — then begun
To kindle fire, and as the new flames gave
Light to the rocks that roof'd them, which the sun
Had never seen, the maid, or whatsoe'er
She was, appear'd distinct, and tall, and fair.

CXVII

Her brow was overhung with coins of gold,
That sparkled o'er the auburn of her hair —
Her clustering hair, whose longer locks were roll'd
In braids behind; and though her stature were

Even of the highest for a female mould,
They nearly reach'd her heel; and in her air
There was a something which bespoke command,
As one who was a lady in the land.

CXVII

Her hair, I said, was auburn; but her eyes
Were black as death, their lashes the same hue,
Of downcast length, in whose silk shadow lies
Deepest attraction; for when to the view
Forth from its raven fringe the full glance flies,
Ne'er with such force the swiftest arrow flew;
'T is as the snake late coil'd, who pours his length,
And hurls at once his venom and his strength.

CXVIII

Her brow was white and low, her cheek's pure dye
Like twilight rosy still with the set sun;
Short upper lip — sweet lips ! that make us sigh
Ever to have seen such; for she was one
Fit for the model of a statuary
(A race of mere impostors, when all 's done —
I 've seen much finer women, ripe and real,
Than all the nonsense of their stone ideal).

CXIX

I 'll tell you why I say so, for 't is just
One should not rail without a decent cause:
There was an Irish lady, to whose bust
I ne'er saw justice done, and yet she was
A frequent model; and if e'er she must
Yield to stern Time and Nature's wrinkling laws,
They will destroy a face which mortal thought
Ne'er compass'd, nor less mortal chisel wrought.

CXX

And such was she, the lady of the cave:
Her dress was very different from the Spanish,
Simpler, and yet of colours not so grave;
For, as you know, the Spanish women banish
Bright hues when out of doors, and yet, while wave
Around them (what I hope will never vanish)
The basquina and the mantilla, they
Seem at the same time mystical and gay.

CXXI

But with our damsel this was not the case:
Her dress was many-colour'd, finely spun;
Her locks curl'd negligently round her face,
But through them gold and gems profusely shone:
Her girdle sparkled, and the richest lace
Flow'd in her veil, and many a precious stone
Flash'd on her little hand; but, what was shocking,
Her small snow feet had slippers, but no stocking.

CXXII

The other female's dress was not unlike,
But of inferior materials: she
Had not so many ornaments to strike,
Her hair had silver only, bound to be
Her dowry; and her veil, in form alike,
Was coarser; and her air, though firm, less free;
Her hair was thicker, but less long; her eyes
As black, but quicker, and of smaller size.

CXXIII

And these two tended him, and cheer'd him both
With food and raiment, and those soft attentions,
Which are (as I must own) of female growth,
And have ten thousand delicate inventions:
They made a most superior mess of broth,
A thing which poesy but seldom mentions,
But the best dish that e'er was cook'd since Homer's
Achilles ordered dinner for new comers.

CXXIV

I 'll tell you who they were, this female pair,
Lest they should seem princesses in disguise;
Besides, I hate all mystery, and that air
Of clap-trap which your recent poets prize;

And so, in short, the girls they really were
They shall appear before your curious eyes,
Mistress and maid; the first was only daughter
Of an old man who lived upon the water.

CXXV

A fisherman he had been in his youth,
And still a sort of fisherman was he;
But other speculations were, in sooth,
Added to his connection with the sea,
Perhaps not so respectable, in truth:
A little smuggling, and some piracy,
Left him, at last, the sole of many masters
Of an ill-gotten million of piastres.

CXXVI

A fisher, therefore, was he, — though of men,
Like Peter the Apostle, — and he fish'd
For wandering merchant-vessels, now and then,
And sometimes caught as many as he wish'd;
The cargoes he confiscated, and gain
He sought in the slave-market too, and dish'd
Full many a morsel for that Turkish trade,
By which, no doubt, a good deal may be made.

CXXVII

He was a Greek, and on his isle had built
(One of the wild and smaller Cyclades)
A very handsome house from out his guilt,
And there he lived exceedingly at ease;
Heaven knows what cash he got or blood he spilt,
A sad old fellow was he, if you please;
But this I know, it was a spacious building,
Full of barbaric carving, paint, and gilding.

CXXVIII

He had an only daughter, call'd Haidée,
The greatest heiress of the Eastern Isles;
Besides, so very beautiful was she,
Her dowry was as nothing to her smiles:
Still in her teens, and like a lovely tree
She grew to womanhood, and between whiles
Rejected several suitors, just to learn
How to accept a better in his turn.

CXXIX

And walking out upon the beach, below
The cliff, towards sunset, on that day she found,
Insensible, — not dead, but nearly so, —
Don Juan, almost famish'd, and half drown'd;
But being naked, she was shock'd, you know,
Yet deem'd herself in common pity bound,
As far as in her lay, 'to take him in,
A stranger' dying, with so white a skin.

CXXX

But taking him into her father's house
Was not exactly the best way to save,
But like conveying to the cat the mouse,
Or people in a trance into their grave;
Because the good old man had so much '*νους*,'
Unlike the honest Arab thieves so brave,
He would have hospitably cured the stranger,
And sold him instantly when out of danger.

CXXXI

And therefore, with her maid, she thought it best
(A virgin always on her maid relies)
To place him in the cave for present rest:
And when, at last, he open'd his black eyes,
Their charity increased about their guest;
And their compassion grew to such a size,
It open'd half the turnpike-gates to heaven
(St. Paul says, 't is the toll which must be given).

CXXXII

They made a fire, — but such a fire as they
Upon the moment could contrive with such
Materials as were cast up round the bay, —
Some broken planks, and oars, that to the touch
Were nearly tinder, since so long they lay
A mast was almost crumbled to a crutch;
But, by God's grace, here wrecks were in such plenty,
That there was fuel to have furnish'd twenty.

CXXXIII

He had a bed of furs, and a pelisse,
For Haidée stripped her sables off to make
His couch; and, that he might be more at ease,
And warm, in case by chance he should awake,
They also gave a petticoat apiece,
She and her maid — and promised by daybreak
To pay him a fresh visit, with a dish
For breakfast, of eggs, coffee, bread, and fish.

CXXXIV

And thus they left him to his lone repose:
Juan slept like a top, or like the dead,
Who sleep at last, perhaps (God only knows),
Just for the present; and in his lull'd head
Not even a vision of his former woes
Throbb'd in accursèd dreams, which sometimes spread
Unwelcome visions of our former years,
Till the eye, cheated, opens thick with tears.

CXXXV

Young Juan slept all dreamless: — but the maid,
Who smooth'd his pillow, as she left the den
Look'd back upon him, and a moment stay'd,
And turn'd, believing that he call'd again.
He slumber'd; yet she thought, at least she said
(The heart will slip, even as the tongue and pen),
He had pronounced her name — but she forgot
That at this moment Juan knew it not.

CXXXVI

And pensive to her father's house she went,
Enjoining silence strict to Zoe, who
Better than her knew what, in fact, she meant,
She being wiser by a year or two:
A year or two 's an age when rightly spent,
And Zoe spent hers, as most women do,
In gaining all that useful sort of knowledge
Which is acquired in Nature's good old college.

CXXXVII

The morn broke, and found Juan slumbering still
Fast in his cave, and nothing clash'd upon
His rest; the rushing of the neighbouring rill,
And the young beams of the excluded sun,
Troubled him not, and he might sleep his fill;
And need he had of slumber yet, for none
Had suffer'd more — his hardships were comparative
To those related in my grand-dad's 'Narrative.'

CXXXVIII

Not so Haidée: she sadly toss'd and tumbled,
And started from her sleep, and, turning o'er
Dream'd of a thousand wrecks, o'er which she stumbled,
And handsome corpses strew'd upon the shore;
And woke her maid so early that she grumbled,
And call'd her father's old slaves up, who swore
In several oaths — Armenian, Turk, and Greek —
They knew not what to think of such a freak.

CXXXIX

But up she got, and up she made them get,
With some pretence about the sun, that makes
Sweet skies just when he rises, or is set;
And 't is, no doubt, a sight to see when breaks
Bright Phœbus, while the mountains still are wet
With mist, and every bird with him awakes,
And night is flung off like a mourning suit
Worn for a husband, — or some other brute.

CXL

I say, the sun is a most glorious sight,
I 've seen him rise full oft, indeed of late
I have sat up on purpose all the night,
Which hastens, as physicians say, one's fate;
And so all ye, who would be in the right
In health and purse, begin your day to date
From daybreak, and when coffin'd at four-score,
Engrave upon the plate, you rose at four.

CXLI

And Haidée met the morning face to face;
Her own was freshest, though a feverish flush
Had dyed it with the headlong blood, whose race
From heart to cheek is curb'd into a blush,
Like to a torrent which a mountain's base,
That overpowers some Alpine river's rush,
Checks to a lake, whose waves in circles spread;
Or the Red Sea — but the sea is not red.

CXLII

And down the cliff the island virgin came,
And near the cave her quick light footsteps drew,
While the sun smiled on her with his first flame,
And young Aurora kiss'd her lips with dew,
Taking her for a sister; just the same
Mistake you would have made on seeing the two,
Although the mortal, quite as fresh and fair,
Had all the advantage, too, of not being air.

CXLIII

And when into the cavern Haidée stepp'd
All timidly, yet rapidly, she saw
That like an infant Juan sweetly slept;
And then she stopp'd, and stood as if in awe
(For sleep is awful), and on tiptoe crept
And wrapt him closer, lest the air, too raw,
Should reach his blood, then o'er him still as death
Bent with hush'd lips, that drank his scarce-drawn breath.

CXLIV

And thus like to an angel o'er the dying
Who die in righteousness, she lean'd; and there
All tranquilly the shipwreck'd boy was lying,
As o'er him lay the calm and stirless air:
But Zoe the meantime some eggs was frying,
Since, after all, no doubt the youthful pair
Must breakfast — and betimes, lest they should ask it,
She drew out her provision from the basket.

CXLV

She knew that the best feelings must have victual,
And that a shipwreck'd youth would hungry be;
Besides, being less in love, she yawn'd a little,
And felt her veins chill'd by the neighbouring sea;
And so, she cook'd their breakfast to a tittle;
I can't say that she gave them any tea,
But there were eggs, fruit, coffee, bread, fish, honey,
With Scio wine, — and all for love, not money.

CXLVI

And Zoe, when the eggs were ready, and
The coffee made, would fain have waken'd Juan;
But Haidée stopp'd her with her quick small hand,
And without word, a sign her finger drew on
Her lip, which Zoe needs must understand;
And, the first breakfast spoilt, prepared a new one,
Because her mistress would not let her break
That sleep which seem'd as it would ne'er awake.

CXLVII

For still he lay, and on his thin worn cheek
A purple hectic play'd like dying day
On the snow-tops of distant hills; the streak
Of sufferance yet upon his forehead lay,
Where the blue veins look'd shadowy, shrunk, and weak;
And his black curls were dewy with the spray,

Which weigh'd upon them yet, all damp and salt,
Mix'd with the stony vapours of the vault.

CXLVIII

And she bent o'er him, and he lay beneath,
Hush'd as the babe upon its mother's breast,
Droop'd as the willow when no winds can breathe,
Lull'd like the depth of ocean when at rest,
Fair as the crowning rose of the whole wreath,
Soft as the callow cygnet in its nest;
In short, he was a very pretty fellow,
Although his woes had turn'd him rather yellow.

CXLIX

He woke and gazed, and would have slept again,
But the fair face which met his eyes forbade
Those eyes to close, though weariness and pain
Had further sleep a further pleasure made;
For woman's face was never form'd in vain
For Juan, so that even when he pray'd
He turn'd from grisly saints, and martyrs hairy,
To the sweet portraits of the Virgin Mary.

CL

And thus upon his elbow he arose,
And look'd upon the lady, in whose cheek
The pale contended with the purple rose,
As with an effort she began to speak;
Her eyes were eloquent, her words would pose,
Although she told him, in good modern Greek,
With an Ionian accent, low and sweet,
That he was faint, and must not talk, but eat.

CLI

Now Juan could not understand a word,
Being no Grecian; but he had an ear,
And her voice was the warble of a bird,
So soft, so sweet, so delicately clear,
That finer, simpler music ne'er was heard;
The sort of sound we echo with a tear,
Without knowing why — an overpowering tone,
Whence Melody descends as from a throne.

CLII

And Juan gazed as one who is awoke
By a distant organ, doubting if he be
Not yet a dreamer, till the spell is broke
By the watchman, or some such reality,
Or by one's early valet's cursèd knock;
At least it is a heavy sound to me,
Who like a morning slumber — for the night
Shows stars and women in a better light.

CLIII

And Juan, too, was help'd out from his dream,
Or sleep, or whatsoe'er it was, by feeling
A most prodigious appetite: the steam
Of Zoe's cookery no doubt was stealing
Upon his senses, and the kindling beam
Of the new fire, which Zoe kept up, kneeling
To stir her viands, made him quite awake
And long for food, but chiefly a beef-steak.

CLIV

But beef is rare within these oxless isles;
Goat's flesh there is, no doubt, and kid, and mutton;
And, when a holiday upon them smiles,
A joint upon their barbarous spits they put on:
But this occurs but seldom, between whiles,
For some of these are rocks with scarce a hut on;
Others are fair and fertile, among which
This, though not large, was one of the most rich.

CLV

I say that beef is rare, and can't help thinking
That the old fable of the Minotaur —
From which our modern morals rightly shrinking
Condemn the royal lady's taste who wore
A cow's shape for a mask — was only (sinking
The allegory) a mere type, no more,
That Pasiphae promoted breeding cattle,
To make the Cretans bloodier in battle.

CLVI

For we all know that English people are
Fed upon beef — I won't say much of beer,
Because 't is liquor only, and being far
From this my subject, has no business here;
We know, too, they are very fond of war,
A pleasure — like all pleasures — rather dear;
So were the Cretans — from which I infer
That beef and battles both were owing to her.

CLVII

But to resume. The languid Juan raised
His head upon his elbow, and he saw
A sight on which he had not lately gazed,
As all his latter meals had been quite raw,
Three or four things, for which the Lord he praised,
And, feeling still the famish'd vulture gnaw,
He fell upon whate'er was offer'd, like
A priest, a shark, an alderman, or pike.

CLVIII

He ate, and he was well supplied: and she,
Who watch'd him like a mother, would have fed
Him past all bounds, because she smiled to see
Such appetite in one she had deem'd dead;
But Zoe, being older than Haidée,
Knew (by tradition, for she ne'er had read)
That famish'd people must be slowly nurst,
And fed by spoonfuls, else they always burst.

CLIX

And so she took the liberty to state,
Rather by deeds than words, because the case
Was urgent, that the gentleman, whose fate
Had made her mistress quit her bed to trace
The sea-shore at this hour, must leave his plate,
Unless he wish'd to die upon the place —
She snatch'd it, and refused another morsel,
Saying, he had gorged enough to make a horse ill.

CLX

Next they — he being naked, save a tatter'd
Pair of scarce decent trowsers — went to work,
And in the fire his recent rags they scatter'd,
And dress'd him, for the present, like a Turk,
Or Greek — that is, although it not much matter'd,
Omitting turban, slippers, pistols, dirk, —
They furnish'd him, entire, except some stitches,
With a clean shirt, and very spacious breeches.

CLXI

And then fair Haidée tried her tongue at speaking,
But not a word could Juan comprehend,
Although he listen'd so that the young Greek in
Her earnestness would ne'er have made an end;
And, as he interrupted not, went eking
Her speech out to her protégé and friend,
Till pausing at the last her breath to take,
She saw he did not understand Romaic.

CLXII

And then she had recourse to nods, and signs,
And smiles, and sparkles of the speaking eye,
And read (the only book she could) the lines
Of his fair face, and found, by sympathy,
The answer eloquent, where the soul shines
And darts in one quick glance a long reply;
And thus in every look she saw exprest
A world of words, and things at which she guess'd.

CLXIII

And now, by dint of fingers and of eyes,
And words repeated after her, he took
A lesson in her tongue; but by surmise,
No doubt, less of her language than her look:
As he who studies fervently the skies
Turns oftener to the stars than to his book,
Thus Juan learn'd his alpha beta better
From Haidée's glance than any graven letter.

CLXIV

'T is pleasing to be school'd in a strange tongue
By female lips and eyes — that is, I mean,
When both the teacher and the taught are young,
As was the case, at least, where I have been;
They smile so when one 's right, and when one 's wrong
They smile still more, and then there intervene 1310
Pressure of hands, perhaps even a chaste kiss; —
I learn'd the little that I know by this:

CLXV

That is, some words of Spanish, Turk, and Greek,
Italian not at all, having no teachers;
Much English I cannot pretend to speak,
Learning that language chiefly from its preachers,
Barrow, South, Tillotson, whom every week
I study, also Blair, the highest reachers
Of eloquence in piety and prose —
I hate your poets, so read none of those. 1320

CLXVI

As for the ladies, I have nought to say,
A wanderer from the British world of fashion,
Where I, like other 'dogs, have had my day,'
Like other men, too, may have had my passion —
But that, like other things, has pass'd away,
And all her fools whom I *could* lay the lash on:
Foes, friends, men, women, now are nought to me
But dreams of what has been, no more to be.

CLXVII

Return we to Don Juan. He begun
To hear new words, and to repeat them; but 1330
Some feelings, universal as the sun,
Were such as could not in his breast be shut
More than within the bosom of a nun:
He was in love, — as you would be, no doubt,
With a young benefactress, — so was she,
Just in the way we very often see.

CLXVIII

And every day by daybreak — rather early
For Juan, who was somewhat fond of rest —
She came into the cave, but it was merely
To see her bird reposing in his nest; 1340
And she would softly stir his locks so curly,
Without disturbing her yet slumbering guest,
Breathing all gently o'er his cheek and mouth,
As o'er a bed of roses the sweet south.

CLXIX

And every morn his colour freshlier came,
And every day help'd on his convalescence;
'T was well, because health in the human frame
Is pleasant, besides being true love's essence,
For health and idleness to passion's flame
Are oil and gunpowder; and some good lessons 1350
Are also learnt from Ceres and from Bacchus,
Without whom Venus will not long attack us.

CLXX

While Venus fills the heart (without heart really
Love, though good always, is not quite so good),
Ceres presents a plate of vermicelli, —
For love must be sustain'd like flesh and blood, —
While Bacchus pours out wine, or hands a jelly:
Eggs, oysters, too, are amatory food;
But who is their purveyor from above
Heaven knows, — it may be Neptune, Pan, or Jove. 1360

CLXXI

When Juan woke he found some good things ready,
A bath, a breakfast, and the finest eyes
That ever made a youthful heart less steady,
Besides her maid's as pretty for their size;

But I have spoken of all this already —
And repetition 's tiresome and unwise, —
Well — Juan, after bathing in the sea,
Came always back to coffee and Haidée.

CLXXII

Both were so young, and one so innocent,
That bathing pass'd for nothing ; Juan seem'd
To her, as 'twere, the kind of being sent,
Of whom these two years she had nightly dream'd,
A something to be loved, a creature meant
To be her happiness, and whom she deem'd
To render happy ; all who joy would win
Must share it, — Happiness was born a twin.

CLXXIII

It was such pleasure to behold him, such
Enlargement of existence to partake
Nature with him, to thrill beneath his touch,
To watch him slumbering, and to see him wake:
To live with him forever were too much;
But then the thought of parting made her quake;
He was her own, her ocean-treasure, cast
Like a rich wreck — her first love, and her last.

CLXXIV

And thus a moon roll'd on, and fair Haidée
Paid daily visits to her boy, and took
Such plentiful precautions, that still he
Remain'd unknown within his craggy nook;
At last her father's prows put out to sea
For certain merchantmen upon the look,
Not as of yore to carry off an Io,
But three Ragusan vessels, bound for Scio.

CLXXV

Then came her freedom, for she had no mother,
So that, her father being at sea, she was
Free as a married woman, or such other
Female, as where she likes may freely pass,
Without even the incumbrance of a brother,
The freest she that ever gazed on glass;
I speak of Christian lands in this comparison,
Where wives, at least, are seldom kept in garrison.

CLXXVI

Now she prolong'd her visits and her talk
(For they must talk), and he had learnt to say
So much as to propose to take a walk, —
For little had he wander'd since the day
On which, like a young flower snapp'd from the stalk,
Drooping and dewy on the beach he lay, —
And thus they walk'd out in the afternoon,
And saw the sun set opposite the moon.

CLXXVII

It was a wild and breaker-beaten coast,
With cliffs above, and a broad sandy shore,
Guarded by shoals and rocks as by an host,
With here and there a creek, whose aspect wore
A better welcome to the tempest-tost;
And rarely ceased the haughty billow's roar,
Save on the dead long summer days, which make
The outstretch'd ocean glitter like a lake.

CLXXVIII

And the small ripple spilt upon the beach
Scarcely o'erpass'd the cream of your champagne,
When o'er the brim the sparkling bumpers reach,
That spring-dew of the spirit ! the heart's rain !
Few things surpass old wine; and they may preach
Who please, — the more because they preach in vain, —
Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter,
Sermons and soda-water the day after.

CLXXIX

Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;
The best of life is but intoxication:
Glory, the grape, love, gold, in these are sunk
The hopes of all men, and of every nation;

Without their sap, how branchless were the trunk
Of life's strange tree, so fruitful on occasion:
But to return, — Get very drunk; and when
You wake with headache, you shall see what then.

CLXXX

Ring for your valet — bid him quickly bring
Some hock and soda-water, then you 'll know
A pleasure worthy Xerxes the great king;
For not the bless'd sherbet, sublimed with snow,
Nor the first sparkle of the desert-spring,
Nor Burgundy in all its sunset glow,
After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter,
Vie with that draught of hock and soda-water.

CLXXXI

The coast — I think it was the coast that I
Was just describing — Yes, it *was* the coast —
Lay at this period quiet as the sky,
The sands untumbled, the blue waves untost,
And all was stillness, save the sea-bird's cry,
And dolphin's leap, and little billow crost
By some low rock or shelve, that made it fret
Against the boundary it scarcely wet.

CLXXXII

And forth they wander'd, her sire being gone,
As I have said, upon an expedition;
And mother, brother, guardian, she had none,
Save Zoe, who, although with due precision
She waited on her lady with the sun,
Thought daily service was her only mission,
Bringing warm water, wreathing her long tresses,
And asking now and then for cast-off dresses.

CLXXXIII

It was the cooling hour, just when the rounded
Red sun sinks down behind the azure hill,
Which then seems as if the whole earth it bounded,
Circling all nature, hush'd, and dim, and still,
With the far mountain-crescent half surrounded
On one side, and the deep sea calm and chill
Upon the other, and the rosy sky,
With one star sparkling through it like an eye.

CLXXXIV

And thus they wander'd forth, and hand in hand,
Over the shining pebbles and the shells,
Glided along the smooth and harden'd sand,
And in the worn and wild receptacles
Work'd by the storms, yet work'd as it were plann'd,
In hollow halls, with sparry roofs and cells,
They turn'd to rest; and, each clasp'd by an arm,
Yielded to the deep twilight's purple charm.

CLXXXV

They look'd up to the sky, whose floating glow
Spread like a rosy ocean, vast and bright;
They gazed upon the glittering sea below,
Whence the broad moon rose circling into sight;
They heard the wave's splash, and the wind so low,
And saw each other's dark eyes darting light
Into each other — and, beholding this,
Their lips drew near, and clung into a kiss;

CLXXXVI

A long, long kiss, a kiss of youth, and love,
And beauty, all concentrating like rays
Into one focus, kindled from above;
Such kisses as belong to early days,
Where heart, and soul, and sense, in concert move,
And the blood 's lava, and the pulse a blaze,
Each kiss a heart-quake, — for a kiss's strength,
I think, it must be reckon'd by its length.

CLXXXVII

By length I mean duration; theirs endured
Heaven knows how long — no doubt they never reckon'd;
And if they had, they could not have secured
The sum of their sensations to a second:
They had not spoken; but they felt allured,
As if their souls and lips each other beckon'd,
Which, being join'd, like swarming bees they clung —
Their hearts the flowers from whence the honey sprung.

CLXXXVIII

They were alone, but not alone as they
Who shut in chambers think it loneliness;
The silent ocean, and the starlight bay,
The twilight glow which momently grew less,
The voiceless sands and dropping caves, that lay
Around them, made them to each other press,
As if there were no life beneath the sky
Save theirs, and that their life could never die.

CLXXXIX

They fear'd no eyes nor ears on that lone beach,
They felt no terrors from the night, they were
All in all to each other: though their speech
Was broken words, they *thought* a language there,—
And all the burning tongues the passions teach
Found in one sigh the best interpreter
Of nature's oracle — first love, — that all
Which Eve has left her daughters since her fall.

CXC

Haidée spoke not of scruples, ask'd no vows,
Nor offer'd any; she had never heard
Of plight and promises to be a spouse,
Or perils by a loving maid incurr'd;
She was all which pure ignorance allows,
And flew to her young mate like a young bird;
And, never having dreamt of falsehood, she
Had not one word to say of constancy.

CXCI

She loved, and was belovèd — she adored,
And she was worshipp'd; after nature's fashion,
Their intense souls, into each other pour'd,
If souls could die, had perish'd in that passion, —
But by degrees their senses were restored,
Again to be o'ercome, again to dash on;
And, beating 'gainst *his* bosom, Haidée's heart
Felt as if never more to beat apart.

CXCII

Alas ! they were so young, so beautiful,
So lonely, loving, helpless, and the hour
Was that in which the heart is always full,
And, having o'er itself no further power,
Prompts deeds eternity can not annul,
But pays off moments in an endless shower
Of hell-fire — all prepared for people giving
Pleasure or pain to one another living.

CXCIII

Alas ! for Juan and Haidée ! they were
So loving and so lovely — till then never,
Excepting our first parents, such a pair
Had run the risk of being damn'd for ever;
And Haidée, being devout as well as fair,
Had, doubtless, heard about the Stygian river,
And hell and purgatory — but forgot
Just in the very crisis she should not.

CXCIV

They look upon each other, and their eyes
Gleam in the moonlight; and her white arm clasps
Round Juan's head, and his around her lies
Half buried in the tresses which it grasps;
She sits upon his knee, and drinks his sighs,
He hers, until they end in broken gasps;
And thus they form a group that 's quite antique,
Half naked, loving, natural, and Greek.

CXCV

And when those deep and burning moments pass'd,
And Juan sunk to sleep within her arms,
She slept not, but all tenderly, though fast,
Sustain'd his head upon her bosom's charms;

And now and then her eye to heaven is cast,
And then on the pale cheek her breast now warms,
Pillow'd on her o'erflowing heart, which pants
With all it granted, and with all it grants.

CXCVI

An infant when it gazes on a light,
A child the moment when it drains the breast,
A devotee when soars the Host in sight,
An Arab with a stranger for a guest,
A sailor when the prize has struck in fight,
A miser filling his most hoarded chest,
Feel rapture; but not such true joy are reaping
As they who watch o'er what they love while sleeping.

CXCVII

For there it lies so tranquil, so beloved,
All that it hath of life with us is living;
So gentle, stirless, helpless, and unmoved,
And all unconscious of the joy 't is giving;
All it hath felt, inflicted, pass'd, and proved,
Hush'd into depths beyond the watcher's diving:
There lies the thing we love with all its errors
And all its charms, like death without its terrors.

CXCVIII

The lady watch'd her lover — and that hour
Of Love's, and Night's, and Ocean's solitude,
O'erflow'd her soul with their united power;
Amidst the barren sand and rocks so rude
She and her wave-worn love had made their bower,
Where nought upon their passion could intrude,
And all the stars that crowded the blue space
Saw nothing happier than her glowing face.

CXCIX

Alas! the love of women! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing;
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
And if 't is lost, life hath no more to bring
To them but mockeries of the past alone,
And their revenge is as the tiger's spring,
Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet, as real
Torture is theirs, what they inflict they feel.

CC

They are right; for man, to man so oft unjust,
Is always so to women; one sole bond
Awaits them, treachery is all their trust;
Taught to conceal, their bursting hearts despond
Over their idol, till some wealthier lust
Buys them in marriage — and what rests beyond?
A thankless husband, next a faithless lover,
Then dressing, nursing, praying, and all 's over.

CCI

Some take a lover, some take drams or prayers,
Some mind their household, others dissipation,
Some run away, and but exchange their cares,
Losing the advantage of a virtuous station;
Few changes e'er can better their affairs,
Theirs being an unnatural situation,
From the dull palace to the dirty hovel:
Some play the devil, and then write a novel.

CCII

Haidée was Nature's bride, and knew not this;
Haidée was Passion's child, born where the sun
Showers triple light, and scorches even the kiss
Of his gazelle-eyed daughters; she was one
Made but to love, to feel that she was his
Who was her chosen: what was said or done
Elsewhere was nothing. She had naught to fear,
Hope, care, nor love, beyond, her heart beat *here*.

CCIII

And oh! that quickening of the heart, that beat!
How much it costs us! yet each rising throb
Is in its cause as its effect so sweet,
That Wisdom, ever on the watch to rob
Joy of its alchymy, and to repeat
Fine truths; even Conscience, too, has a tough job
To make us understand each good old maxim,
So good — I wonder Castlereagh don't tax 'em.

CCIV

And now 't was done — on the lone shore were plighted
Their hearts; the stars, their nuptial torches, shed
Beauty upon the beautiful they lighted:
Ocean their witness, and the cave their bed,
By their own feelings hallow'd and united,
Their priest was Solitude, and they were wed:
And they were happy, for to their young eyes
Each was an angel, and earth paradise.

CCV

Oh, Love! of whom great Cæsar was the suitor,
Titus the master, Antony the slave,
Horace, Catullus, scholars, Ovid tutor,
Sappho the sage blue-stocking, in whose grave
All those may leap who rather would be neuter
(Leucadia's rock still overlooks the wave) —
Oh, Love! thou art the very god of evil,
For, after all, we cannot call thee devil.

CCVI

Thou mak'st the chaste connubial state precarious,
And jestest with the brows of mightiest men:
Cæsar and Pompey, Mahomet, Belisarius,
Have much employ'd the muse of history's pen;
Their lives and fortunes were extremely various,
Such worthies Time will never see again;
Yet to these four in three things the same luck holds,
They all were heroes, conquerors, and cuckolds.

CCVII

Thou mak'st philosophers; there 's Epicurus
And Aristippus, a material crew!
Who to immoral courses would allure us
By theories quite practicable too;
If only from the devil they would insure us,
How pleasant were the maxim (not quite new),
'Eat, drink, and love, what can the rest avail us?'
So said the royal sage Sardanapalus.

CCVIII

But Juan! had he quite forgotten Julia?
And should he have forgotten her so soon?
I can't but say it seems to me most truly a
Perplexing question; but, no doubt, the moon
Does these things for us, and whenever newly a
Strong palpitation rises, 't is her boon,
Else how the devil is it that fresh features
Have such a charm for us poor human creatures?

CCIX

I hate inconstancy — I loathe, detest,
Abhor, condemn, abjure the mortal made
Of such quicksilver clay that in his breast
No permanent foundation can be laid;
Love, constant love, has been my constant guest,
And yet last night, being at a masquerade,
I saw the prettiest creature, fresh from Milan,
Which gave me some sensations like a villain.

CCX

But soon Philosophy came to my aid,
And whisper'd, 'Think of every sacred tie!'
'I will, my dear Philosophy!' I said,
'But then her teeth, and then, oh, Heaven! her eye!
I 'll just inquire if she be wife or maid,
Or neither — out of curiosity.'

'Stop!' cried Philosophy, with air so Grecian
(Though she was masqued then as a fair Venetian);

CCXI

'Stop!' so I stopp'd. — But to return: that which
Men call inconstancy is nothing more
Than admiration due where nature's rich
Profusion with young beauty covers o'er
Some favour'd object; and as in the niche
A lovely statue we almost adore,
This sort of adoration of the real
Is but a heightening of the 'beau ideal.'

CCXII

'T is the perception of the beautiful,
A fine extension of the faculties,
Platonic, universal, wonderful,
Drawn from the stars, and filter'd through the skies,
Without which life would be extremely dull;
In short, it is the use of our own eyes,
With one or two small senses added, just
To hint that flesh is form'd of fiery dust.

CCXIII

Yet 't is a painful feeling, and unwilling,
For surely if we always could perceive
In the same object graces quite as killing
As when she rose upon us like an Eve,
'T would save us many a heartache, many a shilling
(For we must get them any how or grieve),
Whereas if one sole lady pleased for ever,
How pleasant for the heart as well as liver!

CCXIV

The heart is like the sky, a part of heaven,
But changes night and day, too, like the sky;
Now o'er it clouds and thunder must be driven,
And darkness and destruction as on high:
But when it hath been scorch'd, and pierced, and riven,
Its storms expire in water-drops; the eye
Pours forth at last the heart's blood turn'd to tears,
Which make the English climate of our years.

CCXV

The liver is the lazaret of bile,
But very rarely executes its function,
For the first passion stays there such a while,
That all the rest creep in and form a junction,
Life knots of vipers on a dunghill's soil, —
Rage, fear, hate, jealousy, revenge, compunction, —
So that all mischiefs spring up from this entrail,
Like earthquakes from the hidden fire call'd 'central,'

CCXVI

In the mean time, without proceeding more
In this anatomy, I 've finish'd now
Two hundred and odd stanzas as before,
That being about the number I 'll allow
Each canto of the twelve, or twenty-four;
And, laying down my pen, I make my bow,
Leaving Don Juan and Haidée to plead
For them and theirs with all who deign to read.

CANTO THE THIRD

I

Hail, Muse! *et cetera.* — We left Juan sleeping,
Pillow'd upon a fair and happy breast,
And watch'd by eyes that never yet knew weeping,
And loved by a young heart, too deeply blest
To feel the poison through her spirit creeping,
Or know who rested there, a foe to rest,
Had soil'd the current of her sinless years,
And turn'd her pure heart's purest blood to tears!

II

Oh, Love! what is it in this world of ours
Which makes it fatal to be loved? Ah, why
With cypress branches hast thou wreathed thy bowers,
And made thy best interpreter a sigh?
As those who dote on odours pluck the flowers,
And place them on their breast — but place to die —

Thus the frail beings we would fondly cherish
Are laid within our bosoms but to perish.

III

In her first passion woman loves her lover,
In all the others all she loves is love,
Which grows a habit she can ne'er get over,
And fits her loosely — like an easy glove,
As you may find, whene'er you like to prove her:
One man alone at first her heart can move;
She then prefers him in the plural number,
Not finding that the additions much encumber.

IV

I know not if the fault be men's or theirs;
But one thing 's pretty sure; a woman planted
(Unless at once she plunge for life in prayers)
After a decent time must be gallanted;
Although, no doubt, her first of love affairs
Is that to which her heart is wholly granted;
Yet there are some, they say, who have had *none*,
But those who have ne'er end with only *one*.

V

'T is melancholy, and a fearful sign
Of human frailty, folly, also crime,
That love and marriage rarely can combine,
Although they both are born in the same clime;
Marriage from love, like vinegar from wine —
A sad, sour, sober beverage — by time
Is sharpen'd from its high celestial flavour
Down to a very homely household savour.

VI

There 's something of antipathy, as 't were,
Between their present and their future state;
A kind of flattery that 's hardly fair
Is used until the truth arrives too late —
Yet what can people do, except despair?
The same things change their names at such a rate;
For instance — passion in a lover 's glorious,
But in a husband is pronounced uxorious.

VII

Men grow ashamed of being so very fond;
They sometimes also get a little tired
(But that, of course, is rare), and then despond:
The same things cannot always be admired,
Yet 't is 'so nominated in the bond,'
That both are tied till one shall have expired.
Sad thought! to lose the spouse that was adorning
Our days, and put one's servants into mourning.

VIII

There 's doubtless something in domestic doings
Which forms, in fact, true love's antithesis;
Romances paint at full length people's wooings,
But only give a bust of marriages;
For no one cares for matrimonial cooings,
There 's nothing wrong in a connubial kiss:
Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's wife,
He would have written sonnets all his life?

IX

All tragedies are finish'd by a death,
All comedies are ended by a marriage;
The future states of both are left to faith,
For authors fear description might disparage
The worlds to come of both, or fall beneath,
And then both worlds would punish their miscarriage;
So leaving each their priest and prayer-book ready,
They say no more of Death or of the Lady.

X

The only two that in my recollection
Have sung of heaven and hell, or marriage, are
Dante and Milton, and of both the affection
Was hapless in their nuptials, for some bar
Of fault or temper ruin'd the connection
(Such things, in fact, it don't ask much to mar);

But Dante's Beatrice and Milton's Eve
Were not drawn from their spouses, you conceive.

XI

Some persons say that Dante meant theology
By Beatrice, and not a mistress — I,
Although my opinion may require apology,
Deem this a commentator's fantasy,
Unless indeed it was from his own knowledge he
Decided thus, and show'd good reason why;
I think that Dante's more abstruse ecstatics
Meant to personify the mathematics.

XII

Haidée and Juan were not married, but
The fault was theirs, not mine; it is not fair.
Chaste reader, then, in any way to put
The blame on me, unless you wish they were;
Then if you 'd have them wedded, please to shut
The book which treats of this erroneous pair,
Before the consequences grow too awful;
'T is dangerous to read of loves unlawful.

XIII

Yet they were happy, — happy in the illicit
Indulgence of their innocent desires;
But more imprudent grown with every visit,
Haidée forgot the island was her sire's;
When we have what we like, 't is hard to miss it,
At least in the beginning, ere one tires;
Thus she came often, not a moment losing,
Whilst her piratical papa was cruising.

XIV

Let not his mode of raising cash seem strange,
Although he fleeced the flags of every nation,
For into a prime minister but change
His title, and 't is nothing but taxation;
But he, more modest, took an humbler range
Of life, and in an honester vocation
Pursued o'er the high seas his watery journey,
And merely practised as a sea-attorney.

XV

The good old gentleman had been detain'd
By winds and waves, and some important captures;
And, in the hope of more, at sea remain'd,
Although a squall or two had damp'd his raptures,
By swamping one of the prizes; he had chain'd
His prisoners, dividing them like chapters
In number'd lots; they all had cuffs and collars,
And averaged each from ten to a hundred dollars.

XVI

Some he disposed of off Cape Matapan,
Among his friends the Mainots; some he sold
To his Tunis correspondents, save one man
Toss'd overboard unsaleable (being old);
The rest — save here and there some richer one,
Reserved for future ransom — in the hold
Were link'd alike, as for the common people he
Had a large order from the Dey of Tripoli.

XVII

The merchandise was served in the same way,
Pieced out for different marts in the Levant;
Except some certain portions of the prey,
Light classic articles of female want,
French stuffs, lace, tweezers, toothpicks, teapot, tray,
Guitars and castanets from Alicant,
All which selected from the spoil he gathers,
Robb'd for his daughter by the best of fathers.

XVIII

A monkey, a Dutch mastiff, a mackaw,
Two parrots, with a Persian cat and kittens,
He chose from several animals he saw —
A terrier, too, which once had been a Briton's,
Who dying on the coast of Ithaca,
The peasants gave the poor dumb thing a pittance;

These to secure in this strong blowing weather,
He caged in one huge hamper altogether.

XIX

Then having settled his marine affairs,
Despatching single crusiers here and there,
His vessel having need of some repairs,
He shaped his course to where his daughter fair
Continued still her hospitable cares;
But that part of the coast being shoal and bare,
And rough with reefs which ran out many a mile,
His port lay on the other side o' the isle.

XX

And there he went ashore without delay,
Having no custom-house nor quarantine
To ask him awkward questions on the way
About the time and place where he had been:
He left his ship to be hove down next day,
With orders to the people to careen;
So that all hands were busy beyond measure,
In getting out goods, ballast, guns, and treasure.

XXI

Arriving at the summit of a hill
Which overlook'd the white walls of his home,
He stopp'd. — What singular emotions fill
Their bosoms who have been induced to roam!
With fluttering doubts if all be well or ill —
With love for many, and with fears for some;
All feelings which o'erleap the years long lost,
And bring our hearts back to their starting-post.

XXII

The approach of home to husbands and to sires,
After long travelling by land or water,
Most naturally some small doubt inspires —
A female family 's a serious matter
(None trusts the sex more, or so much admires —
But they hate flattery, so I never flatter);
Wives in their husbands' absences grow subtler,
And daughters sometimes run off with the butler.

XXIII

An honest gentleman at his return
May not have the good fortune of Ulysses;
Not all lone matrons for their husbands mourn,
Or show the same dislike to suitors' kisses;
The odds are that he finds a handsome urn
To his memory — and two or three young misses
Born to some friend, who holds his wife and riches, —
And that *his* Argus — bites him by the breeches.

XXIV

If single, probably his plighted fair
Has in his absence wedded some rich miser;
But all the better, for the happy pair
May quarrel, and the lady growing wiser,
He may resume his amatory care
As cavalier servente, or despise her;
And that his sorrow may not be a dumb one,
Write odes on the Inconstancy of Woman.

XXV

And oh! ye gentlemen who have already
Some chaste *liaison* of the kind — I mean
An honest friendship with a married lady —
The only thing of this sort ever seen
To last — of all connections the most steady,
And the true Hymen (the first 's but a screen) —
Yet for all that keep not too long away,
I 've known the absent wrong'd four times a day.

XXVI

Lambro, our sea-solicitor, who had
Much less experience of dry land than ocean,
On seeing his own chimney-smoke, felt glad;
But not knowing metaphysics, had no notion
Of the true reason of his not being sad,
Or that of any other strong emotion;
He loved his child, and would have wept the loss of her,
But knew the cause no more than a philosopher.

XXVII

He saw his white walls shining in the sun,
His garden trees all shadowy and green;
He heard his rivulet's light bubbling run,
The distant dog-bark; and perceived between
The umbrage of the wood so cool and dun
The moving figures, and the sparkling sheen
Of arms (in the East all arm) — and various dyes
Of colour'd garbs, as bright as butterflies.

XXVIIII

And as the spot where they appear he nears,
Surprised at these unwonted signs of idling,
He hears — alas! no music of the spheres,
But an unhallow'd, earthly sound of fiddling!
A melody which made him doubt his ears,
The cause being past his guessing or unriddling;
A pipe, too, and a drum, and shortly after,
A most unoriental roar of laughter.

XXIX

And still more nearly to the place advancing,
Descending rather quickly the declivity,
Through the waved branches o'er the greensward glancing,
'Midst other indications of festivity,
Seeing a troop of his domestics dancing
Like dervises, who turn as on a pivot, he
Perceived it was the Pyrrhic dance so martial,
To which the Levantines are very partial.

XXX

And further on a group of Grecian girls,
The first and tallest her white kerchief waving,
Were strung together like a row of pearls,
Link'd hand in hand, and dancing; each too having
Down her white neck long floating auburn curls
(The least of which would set ten poets raving);
Their leader sang — and bounded to her song,
With choral step and voice, the virgin throng.

XXXI

And here, assembled cross-legg'd round their trays,
Small social parties just begun to dine;
Pilaus and meats of all sorts met the gaze,
And flasks of Samian and of Chian wine,
And sherbet cooling in the porous vase;
Above them their dessert grew on its vine,
The orange and pomegranate nodding o'er
Dropp'd in their laps, scarce pluck'd, their mellow store.

XXXII

A band of children, round a snow-white ram,
There wreathe his venerable horns with flowers;
While peaceful as if still an unwean'd lamb,
The patriarch of the flock all gently cowers
His sober head, majestically tame,
Or eats from out the palm, or playful lowers
His brow, as if in act to butt, and then
Yielding to their small hands, draws back again.

XXXIII

Their classical profiles, and glittering dresses,
Their large black eyes, and soft seraphic cheeks,
Crimson as cleft pomegranates, their long tresses,
The gesture which enchants, the eye that speaks,
The innocence which happy childhood blesses,
Made quite a picture of these little Greeks;
So that the philosophical beholder
Sigh'd for their sakes — that they should e'er grow older.

XXXIV

Afar, a dwarf buffoon stood telling tales
To a sedate grey circle of old smokers,
Of secret treasures found in hidden vales,
Of wonderful replies from Arab jokers,
Of charms to make good gold and cure bad ails,
Of rocks bewitch'd that open to the knockers,
Of magic ladies who, by one sole act,
Transform'd their lords to beasts (but that 's a fact).

XXXV

Here was no lack of innocent diversion
For the imagination or the senses,
Song, dance, wine, music, stories from the Persian,
All pretty pastimes in which no offence is;
But Lambro saw all these things with aversion,
Perceiving in his absence such expenses,
Dreading that climax of all human ills,
The inflammation of his weekly bills.

XXXVI

Ah! what is man? what perils still environ
The happiest mortals even after dinner —
A day of gold from out an age of iron
Is all that life allows the luckiest sinner;
Pleasure (whene'er she sings, at least) 's a siren,
That lures, to flay alive, the young beginner;
Lambro's reception at his people's banquet
Was such as fire accords to a wet blanket.

XXXVII

He — being a man who seldom used a word
Too much, and wishing gladly to surprise
(In general he surprised men with the sword)
His daughter — had not sent before to advise
Of his arrival, so that no one stirr'd;
And long he paused to re-assure his eyes
In fact much more astonish'd than delighted,
To find so much good company invited.

XXXVIII

He did not know (alas! how men will lie)
That a report (especially the Greeks)
Avouch'd his death (such people never die),
And put his house in mourning several weeks, —
But now their eyes and also lips were dry;
The bloom, too, had return'd to Haidée's cheeks.
Her tears, too, being return'd into their fount,
She now kept house upon her own account.

XXXIX

Hence all this rice, meat, dancing, wine, and fidlling,
Which turn'd the isle into a place of pleasure;
The servants all were getting drunk or idling,
A life which made them happy beyond measure.
Her father's hospitality seem'd middling,
Compared with what Haidée did with his treasure;
'T was wonderful how things went on improving,
While she had not one hour to spare from loving.

XL

Perhaps you think in stumbling on this feast
He flew into a passion, and in fact
There was no mighty reason to be pleased;
Perhaps you prophesy some sudden act,
The whip, the rack, or dungeon at the least,
To teach his people to be more exact,
And that, proceeding at a very high rate,
He show'd the royal *penchants* of a pirate.

XLI

You 're wrong. — He was the mildest manner'd man
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat:
With such true breeding of a gentleman,
You never could divine his real thought;
No courtier could, and scarcely woman can
Gird more deceit within a petticoat;
Pity he loved adventurous life's variety,
He was so great a loss to good society.

XLII

Advancing to the nearest dinner tray,
Tapping the shoulder of the nighest guest,
With a peculiar smile, which, by the way,
Boded no good, whatever it express'd,
He ask'd the meaning of this holiday;
The vinous Greek to whom he had address'd
His question, much too merry to divine
The questioner, fill'd up a glass of wine,

XLIII

And without turning his facetious head,
Over his shoulder, with a Bacchant air,
Presented the o'erflowing cup, and said,
'Talking 's dry work, I have no time to spare.'
A second hiccup'd, 'Our old master 's dead,
You 'd better ask our mistress who 's his heir.'
'Our mistress!' quoth a third: 'Our mistress! — pooh! —
You mean our master — not the old, but new.'

XLIV

These rascals, being new comers, knew not whom
They thus address'd — and Lambro's visage fell —
And o'er his eye a momentary gloom
Pass'd, but he strove quite courteously to quell
The expression, and endeavouring to resume
His smile, requested one of them to tell
The name and quality of his new patron,
Who seem'd to have turn'd Haidée into a matron.

XLV

'I know not,' quoth the fellow, 'who or what
He is, nor whence he came — and little care;
But this I know, that this roast capon 's fat,
And that good wine ne'er wash'd down better fare;
And if you are not satisfied with that,
Direct your questions to my neighbour there;
He 'll answer all for better or for worse,
For none likes more to hear himself converse.'

XLVI

I said that Lambro was a man of patience,
And certainly he show'd the best of breeding,
Which scarce even France, the paragon of nations,
E'er saw her most polite of sons exceeding;
He bore these sneers against his near relations,
His own anxiety, his heart, too, bleeding,
The insults, too, of every servile glutton,
Who all the time was eating up his mutton.

XLVII

Now in a person used to much command —
To bid men come, and go, and come again —
To see his orders done, too, out of hand —
Whether the word was death, or but the chain —
It may seem strange to find his manners bland;
Yet such things are, which I can not explain,
Though doubtless he who can command himself
Is good to govern — almost as a Guelf.

XLVIII

Not that he was not sometimes rash or so,
But never in his real and serious mood;
Then calm, concentrated, and still, and slow,
He lay coil'd like the boa in the wood;
With him it never was a word and blow,
His angry word once o'er, he shed no blood,
But in his silence there was much to rue,
And his *one* blow left little work for *two*.

XLIX

He ask'd no further questions, and proceeded
On to the house, but by a private way,
So that the few who met him hardly heeded,
So little they expected him that day;
If love paternal in his bosom pleaded
For Haidée's sake, is more than I can say,
But certainly to one deem'd dead, returning,
This revel seem'd a curious mode of mourning.

L

If all the dead could now return to life
(Which God forbid !) or some, or a great many,
For instance, if a husband or his wife
(Nuptial examples are as good as any),
No doubt whate'er might be their former strife,
The present weather would be much more rainy —
Tears shed into the grave of the connection
Would share most probably its resurrection.

LI

He enter'd in the house no more his home,
A thing to human feelings the most trying,
And harder for the heart to overcome,
Perhaps, than even the mental pangs of dying;
To find our hearthstone turn'd into a tomb,
And round its once warm precincts palely lying
The ashes of our hopes, is a deep grief,
Beyond a single gentleman's belief.

LII

He enter'd in the house — his home no more,
For without hearts there is no home; and felt
The solitude of passing his own door
Without a welcome; *there* he long had dwelt,
There his few peaceful days Time had swept o'er,
There his worn bosom and keen eye would melt
Over the innocence of that sweet child,
His only shrine of feelings undefiled.

LIII

He was a man of a strange temperament,
Of mild demeanour though of savage mood,
Moderate in all his habits, and content
With temperance in pleasure, as in food,
Quick to perceive, and strong to bear, and meant
For something better, if not wholly good;
His country's wrongs and his despair to save her
Had stung him from a slave to an enslaver.

LIV

The love of power, and rapid gain of gold,
The hardness by long habitude produced,
The dangerous life in which he had grown old,
The mercy he had granted oft abused,
The sights he was accustom'd to behold,
The wild seas, and wild men with whom he cruised,
Had cost his enemies a long repentance,
And made him a good friend, but bad acquaintance.

LV

But something of the spirit of old Greece
Flash'd o'er his soul a few heroic rays,
Such as lit onward to the Golden Fleece
His predecessors in the Colchian days;
'T is true he had no ardent love for peace —
Alas! his country show'd no path to praise:
Hate to the world and war with every nation
He waged, in vengeance of her degradation.

LVI

Still o'er his mind the influence of the clime
Shed its Ionian elegance, which show'd
Its power unconsciously full many a time, —
A taste seen in the choice of his abode,
A love of music and of scenes sublime,
A pleasure in the gentle stream that flow'd
Past him in crystal, and a joy in flowers,
Bedew'd his spirit in his calmer hours.

LVII

But whatsoe'er he had of love reposed
On that belovèd daughter; she had been
The only thing which kept his heart unclosed
Amidst the savage deeds he had done and seen;
A lonely pure affection unopposed:
There wanted but the loss of this to wean
His feelings from all milk of human kindness,
And turn him like the Cyclops mad with blindness.

LVIII

The cubless tigress in her jungle raging
Is dreadful to the shepherd and the flock;
The ocean when its yeasty war is waging
Is awful to the vessel near the rock;
But violent things will sooner bear assuaging,
Their fury being spent by its own shock,
Than the stern, single, deep, and wordless ire
Of a strong human heart, and in a sire.

LIX

It is a hard although a common case
To find our children running restive — they
In whom our brightest days we would retrace,
Our little selves re-form'd in finer clay,
Just as old age is creeping on apace,
And clouds come o'er the sunset of our day,
They kindly leave us, though not quite alone,
But in good company — the gout or stone.

LX

Yet a fine family is a fine thing
(Provided they don't come in after dinner);

'T is beautiful to see a matron bring
Her children up (if nursing them don't thin her);
Like cherubs round an altar-piece they cling
To the fire-side (a sight to touch a sinner).
A lady with her daughters or her nieces
Shines like a guinea and seven-shilling pieces. 480

LXI

Old Lambro pass'd unseen a private gate,
And stood within his hall at eventide;
Meantime the lady and her lover sate
At wassail in their beauty and their pride:
An ivory inlaid table spread with state
Before them, and fair slaves on every side;
Gems, gold, and silver, form'd the service mostly,
Mother of pearl and coral the less costly.

LXII

The dinner made about a hundred dishes;
Lamb and pistachio nuts — in short, all meats, 490
And saffron soups, and sweetbreads; and the fishes
Were of the finest that e'er flounced in nets,
Drest to a Sybarite's most pamper'd wishes;
The beverage was various sherbets
Of raisin, orange, and pomegranate juice,
Squeezed through the rind, which makes it best for use.

LXIII

These were ranged round, each in its crystal ewer,
And fruits, and date-bread loaves closed the repast,
And Mocha's berry, from Arabia pure,
In small fine China cups, came in at last; 500
Gold cups of filigree made to secure
The hand from burning underneath them placed,
Cloves, cinnamon, and saffron too were boil'd
Up with the coffee, which (I think) they spoil'd.

LXIV

The hangings of the room were tapestry, made
Of velvet panels, each of different hue,
And thick with damask flowers of silk inlaid;
And round them ran a yellow border too;
The upper border, richly wrought, display'd,
Embroider'd delicately o'er with blue,
Soft Persian sentences, in lilac letters, 511
From poets, or the moralists their betters.

LXV

These Oriental writings on the wall,
Quite common in those countries, are a kind
Of monitors adapted to recall,
Like skulls at Memphian banquets, to the mind
The words which shook Belshazzar in his hall,
And took his kingdom from him: You will find,
Though sages may pour out their wisdom's treasure,
There is no sterner moralist than Pleasure.

LXVI

A beauty at the season's close grown hectic, 521
A genius who has drunk himself to death,
A rake turn'd methodistic, or Eclectic
(For that 's the name they like to pray beneath) —
But most, an alderman struck apoplectic,
Are things that really take away the breath, —
And show that late hours, wine, and love are able
To do not much less damage than the table.

LXVII

Haidée and Juan carpeted their feet
On crimson satin, border'd with pale blue; 530
Their sofa occupied three parts complete
Of the apartment — and appear'd quite new;
The velvet cushions (for a throne more meet)
Were scarlet, from whose glowing centre grew
A sun emboss'd in gold, whose rays of tissue
Meridian-like, were seen all light to issue.

LXVIII

Crystal and marble, plate and porcelain,
Had done their work of splendour; Indian mats

And Persian carpets, which the heart bled to stain,
Over the floors were spread; gazelles and cats,
And dwarfs and blacks, and such like things, that gain
Their bread as ministers and favourites (that 's
To say, by degradation) mingled there
As plentiful as in a court, or fair.

LXIX

There was no want of lofty mirrors, and
The tables, most of ebony inlaid
With mother of pearl or ivory, stood at hand,
Or were of tortoise-shell or rare woods made,
Fretted with gold or silver: — by command,
The greater part of these were ready spread
With viands and sherbets in ice — and wine —
Kept for all comers at all hours to dine.

LXX

Of all the dresses I select Haidée's:
She wore two jelicks — one was of pale yellow;
Of azure, pink, and white was her chemise —
'Neath which her breast heaved like a little billow;
With buttons form'd of pearls as large as peas,
All gold and crimson shone her jelick's fellow,
And the striped white gauze baracan that bound her,
Like fleecy clouds about the moon, flow'd round her.

LXXI

One large gold bracelet clasp'd each lovely arm,
Lockless — so pliable from the pure gold
That the hand stretch'd and shut it without harm,
The limb which it adorn'd its only mould;
So beautiful — its very shape would charm;
And, clinging as if loath to lose its hold,
The purest ore enclosed the whitest skin
That e'er by precious metal was held in.

LXXII

Around, as princess of her father's land,
A like gold bar above her instep roll'd
Announced her rank; twelve rings were on her hand;
Her hair was starr'd with gems; her veil's fine fold
Below her breast was fasten'd with a band
Of lavish pearls, whose worth could scarce be told;
Her orange silk full Turkish trousers furl'd
About the prettiest ankle in the world.

LXXIII

Her hair's long auburn waves down to her heel
Flow'd like an Alpine torrent which the sun
Dyes with his morning light, — and would conceal
Her person if allow'd at large to run,
And still they seem resentfully to feel
The silken fillet's curb, and sought to shun
Their bonds whene'er some Zephyr caught began
To offer his young pinion as her fan.

LXXIV

Round her she made an atmosphere of life,
The very air seem'd lighter from her eyes,
They were so soft and beautiful, and rife
With all we can imagine of the skies,
And pure as Pysche ere she grew a wife —
Too pure even for the purest human ties;
Her overpowering presence made you feel
It would not be idolatry to kneel.

LXXV

Her eyelashes, though dark as night, were tinged
(It is the country's custom), but in vain;
For those large black eyes were so blackly fringed,
The glossy rebels mock'd the jetty stain,
And in their native beauty stood avenged:
Her nails were touch'd with henna; but again
The power of art was turn'd to nothing, for
They could not look more rosy than before.

LXXVI

The henna should be deeply dyed to make
The skin relieved appear more fairly fair;
She had no need of this, day ne'er will break
On mountain tops more heavenly white than her:

The eye might doubt if it were well awake,
She was so like a vision; I might err,
But Shakspeare also says, 't is very silly
'To gild refinèd gold, or paint the lily.'

LXXVII

Juan had on a shawl of black and gold,
But a white baracan, and so transparent
The sparkling gems beneath you might behold,
Like small stars through the milky way apparent;
His turban, furl'd in many a graceful fold,
An emerald aigrette with Haidée's hair in 't
Surmounted as its clasp — a glowing crescent,
Whose rays shone ever trembling, but incessant.

LXXVIII

And now they were diverted by their suite,
Dwarfs, dancing girls, black eunuchs, and a poet,
Which made their new establishment complete;
The last was of great fame, and liked to show it:
His verses rarely wanted their due feet;
And for his theme — he seldom sung below it,
He being paid to satirize or flatter,
As the psalm says, 'inditing a good matter.'

LXXIX

He praised the present, and abused the past,
Reversing the good custom of old days,
An Eastern anti-jacobin at last
He turn'd, preferring pudding to *no* praise —
For some few years his lot had been o'ercast
By his seeming independent in his lays,
But now he sung the Sultan and the Pacha
With truth like Southey, and with verse like Crashaw.

LXXX

He was a man who had seen many changes,
And always changed as true as any needle;
His polar star being one which rather ranges,
And not the fix'd — he knew the way to wheedle:
So vile he 'scaped the doom which oft avenges;
And being fluent (save indeed when fee'd ill),
He lied with such a fervour of intention —
There was no doubt he earn'd his laureate pension.

LXXXI

But he had genius, — when a turncoat has it,
The 'Vates irritabilis' takes care
That without notice few full moons shall pass it;
Even good men like to make the public stare: —
But to my subject — let me see — what was it? —
Oh! — the third canto — and the pretty pair —
Their loves, and feasts, and house, and dress, and mode
Of living in their insular abode.

LXXXII

Their poet, a sad trimmer, but no less
In company a very pleasant fellow,
Had been the favourite of full many a mess
Of men, and made them speeches when half mellow;
And though his meaning they could rarely guess,
Yet still they deign'd to hiccup or to bellow
The glorious meed of popular applause,
Of which the first ne'er knows the second cause.

LXXXIII

But now being lifted into high society,
And having pick'd up several odds and ends
Of free thoughts in his travels for variety,
He deem'd, being in a lone isle, among friends,
That, without any danger of a riot, he
Might for long lying make himself amends;
And, singing as he sung in his warm youth,
Agree to a short armistice with truth.

LXXXIV

He had travell'd 'mongst the Arabs, Turks, and Franks,
And knew the self-loves of the different nations;

And having lived with people of all ranks,
Had something ready upon most occasions —
Which got him a few presents and some thanks.
He varied with some skill his adulations;
To 'do at Rome as Romans do,' a piece
Of conduct was which he observed in Greece.

LXXXV

Thus, usually, when he was ask'd to sing,
He gave the different nations something national;
'T was all the same to him — 'God save the king,'
Or '*Ça ira*,' according to the fashion all:
His muse made increment of any thing,
From the high lyric down to the low rational:
If Pindar sang horse-races, what should hinder
Himself from being as pliable as Pindar?

LXXXVI

In France, for instance, he would write a chanson;
In England a six canto quarto tale;
In Spain, he 'd make a ballad or romance on
The last war — much the same in Portugal;
In Germany, the Pegasus he 'd prance on
Would be old Goethe's (see what says De Staël);
In Italy he 'd ape the 'Trecentisti;'
In Greece, he 'd sing some sort of hymn like this t' ye:

1

The isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

2

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse;
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' 'Islands of the Blest.'

3

The mountains look on Marathon —
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

4

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations; — all were his!
He counted them at break of day —
And when the sun set where were they?

5

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now —
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

6

'T is something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush — for Greece a tear.

7

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?
Must *we* but blush? — Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!

8

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no; — the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, 'Let one living head,
But one arise, — we come, we come!'
'T is but the living who are dumb.

9

In vain — in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call —
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

10

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave —
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

11

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served — but served Polycrates —

A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

12

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

13

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

14

Trust not for freedom to the Franks —
They have a king who buys and sells:
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells;
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

15

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade —
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

16

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine —
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

LXXXVII

Thus sung, or would, or could, or should have sung,
The modern Greek, in tolerable verse;
If not like Orpheus quite, when Greece was young,
Yet in these times he might have done much worse:
His strain display'd some feeling — right or wrong;
And feeling, in a poet, is the source
Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,
And take all colours — like the hands of dyers.

LXXXVIII

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think;
'T is strange, the shortest letter which man uses
Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
Of ages; to what straits old Time reduces
Frail man, when paper — even a rag like this,
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that 's his.

LXXXIX

And when his bones are dust, his grave a blank,
His station, generation, even his nation,
Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank
In chronological commemoration,
Some dull MS. oblivion long has sank,
Or graven stone found in a barrack's station
In digging the foundation of a closet,
May turn his name up, as a rare deposit.

XC

And glory long has made the sages smile;
'T is something, nothing, words, illusion, wind —
Depending more upon the historian's style
Than on the name a person leaves behind:
Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to Hoyle:
The present century was growing blind
To the great Marlborough's skill in giving knocks,
Until his late Life by Archdeacon Coxe.

XCI

Milton 's the prince of poets — so we say;
A little heavy, but no less divine:
An independent being in his day —
Learn'd, pious, temperate in love and wine;
But, his life falling into Johnson's way,
We 're told this great high priest of all the Nine
Was whipt at college — a harsh sire — odd spouse,
For the first Mrs. Milton left his house.

XCII

All these are, *certes*, entertaining facts,
Like Shakspeare's stealing deer, Lord Bacon's bribes;

Like Titus' youth, and Cæsar's earliest acts;
Like Burns (whom Doctor Currie well describes);
Like Cromwell's pranks; — but although truth exacts
These amiable descriptions from the scribes,
As most essential to their hero's story,
They do not much contribute to his glory.

XCIII

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
He prated to the world of 'Pantisocracy;'
Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who then
Season'd his pedlar poems with democracy;
Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
Let to the *Morning Post* its aristocracy;
When he and Southey, following the same path,
Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath).

XCIV

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
The very Botany Bay in moral geography;
Their loyal treason, renegado rigour,
Are good manure for their more bare biography.
Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is bigger
Than any since the birthday of typography;
A drowsy frowzy poem, call'd the '*Excursion*,'
Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

XCV

He there builds up a formidable dyke
Between his own and others' intellect;
But Wordsworth's poem, and his followers, like
Joanna Southcote's Shiloh, and her sect,
Are things which in this century don't strike
The public mind, — so few are the elect;
And the new births of both their stale virginities
Have proved but dropsies, taken for divinities.

XCVI

But let me to my story: I must own,
If I have any fault, it is digression —
Leaving my people to proceed alone,
While I soliloquize beyond expression;
But these are my addresses from the throne,
Which put off business to the ensuing session:
Forgetting each omission is a loss to
The world, not quite so great as Ariosto.

XCVII

I know that what our neighbours call '*longueurs*'
(We 've not so good a *word*, but have the *thing*
In that complete perfection which ensures
An epic from Bob Southey every spring),
Form not the true temptation which allures
The reader; but 't would not be hard to bring
Some fine examples of the *epopée*,
To prove its grand ingredient is *ennui*.

XCVIII

We learn from Horace, 'Homer sometimes sleeps;'
We feel without him, Wordsworth sometimes wakes, —
To show with what complacency he creeps,
With his dear '*Waggoners*,' around his lakes.
He wishes for 'a boat' to sail the deeps —
Of ocean? — No, of air; and then he makes
Another outcry for 'a little boat,'
And drivels seas to set it well afloat.

XCIX

If he must fain sweep o'er the ethereal plain,
And Pegasus runs restive in his 'Waggon,'
Could he not beg the loan of Charles's Wain?
Or pray Medea for a single dragon?
Or if, too classic for his vulgar brain,
He fear'd his neck to venture such a nag on,
And he must needs mount nearer to the moon,
Could not the blockhead ask for a balloon?

C

'Pedlars,' and 'Boats,' and 'Waggons!' Oh! ye shades
Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to this?

That trash of such sort not alone evades
Contempt, but from the bathos' vast abyss
Floats scumlike uppermost, and these Jack Cades
Of sense and song above your graves may hiss —
The 'little boatman' and his 'Peter Bell'
Can sneer at him who drew 'Achitopehl'!

CI

T' our tale. — The feast was over, the slaves gone,
The dwarfs and dancing girls had all retired;
The Arab lore and poet's song were done,
And every sound of revelry expired;
The lady and her lover, left alone,
The rosy flood of twilight's sky admired; —
Ave Maria! o'er the earth and sea,
That heavenliest hour of Heaven is worthiest thee!

CII

Ave Maria! blessèd be the hour!
The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seem'd stirr'd with prayer.

CIII

Ave Maria! 't is the hour of prayer!
Ave Maria! 't is the hour of love!
Ave Maria! may our spirits dare
Look up to thine and to thy Son's above!
Ave Maria! oh that face so fair!
Those downcast eyes beneath the Almighty dove —
What though 't is but a pictured image? — strike —
That painting is no idol, — 't is too like.

CIV

Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
In nameless print — that I have no devotion;
But set those persons down with me to pray,
And you shall see who has the properest notion
Of getting into heaven the shortest way;
My altars are the mountains and the ocean,
Earth, air, stars, — all that springs from the great Whole,
Who hath produced, and will receive the soul.

CV

Sweet hour of twilight! — in the solitude
Of the pine forest, and the silent shore
Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,
Rooted where once the Adrian wave flow'd o'er,
To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood,
Evergreen forest! which Boccaccio's lore
And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to me,
How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!

CVI

The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,
Making their summer lives one ceaseless song,
Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and mine,
And vesper bell's that rose the boughs along;
The spectre huntsman of Onesti's line,
His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the fair throng
Which learn'd from this example not to fly
From a true lover, — shadow'd my mind's eye.

CVII

Oh, Hesperus! thou bringest all good things —
Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,
To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
The welcome stall to the o'erlabour'd steer;
Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,
Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,
Are gather'd round us by thy look of rest;
Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

CVIII

Soft hour! which wakes the wish and melts the heart
Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
When they from their sweet friends are torn apart;
Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way
As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
Seeming to weep the dying day's decay;
Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
Ah! surely nothing dies but something mourns!

CIX

When Nero perish'd by the justest doom
Which ever the destroyer yet destroy'd,
Amidst the roar of liberated Rome,
Of nations freed, and the world overjoy'd,
Some hands unseen strew'd flowers upon his tomb:
Perhaps the weakness of a heart not void
Of feeling for some kindness done, when power
Had left the wretch an uncorrupted hour.

CX

But I 'm digressing; what on earth has Nero,
Or any such like sovereign buffoons,
To do with the transactions of my hero,
More than such madmen's fellow man — the moon's?
Sure my invention must be down at zero,
And I grown one of many 'wooden spoons'
Of verse (the name with which we Cantabs please
To dub the last of honours in degrees).

CXI

I feel this tediousness will never do —
'T is being *too* epic, and I must cut down
(In copying) this long canto into two;
They 'll never find it out, unless I own
The fact, excepting some experienced few;
And then as an improvement 't will be shown:
I 'll prove that such the opinion of the critic is
From Aristotle *passim*. — See Ποιητικης.

CANTO THE FOURTH

I

Nothing so difficult as a beginning
In poesy, unless perhaps the end;
For oftentimes when Pegasus seems winning
The race, he sprains a wing, and down we tend,
Like Lucifer when hurl'd from heaven for sinning;
Our sin the same, and hard as his to mend,
Being pride, which leads the mind to soar too far,
Till our own weakness shows us what we are.

II

But Time, which brings all beings to their level,
And sharp Adversity, will teach at last
Man, — and, as we would hope, — perhaps the devil,
That neither of their intellects are vast:
While youth's hot wishes in our red veins revel,
We know not this — the blood flows on too fast;
But as the torrent widens towards the ocean,
We ponder deeply on each past emotion.

III

As boy, I thought myself a clever fellow,
And wish'd that others held the same opinion;
They took it up when my days grew more mellow,
And other minds acknowledged my dominion:
Now my sere fancy 'falls into the yellow
Leaf,' and Imagination droops her pinion,
And the sad truth which hovers o'er my desk
Turns what was once romantic to burlesque.

IV

And if I laugh at any mortal thing,
'T is that I may not weep; and if I weep,
'T is that our nature cannot always bring
Itself to apathy, for we must steep
Our hearts first in the depths of Lethe's spring,
Ere what we least wish to behold will sleep:

Thetis baptized her mortal son in Styx;
A mortal mother would on Lethe fix.

V

Some have accused me of a strange design
Against the creed and morals of the land,
And trace it in this poem every line:
I don't pretend that I quite understand
My own meaning when I would be *very* fine;
But the fact is that I have nothing plann'd,
Unless it were to be a moment merry,
A novel word in my vocabulary.

VI

To the kind reader of our sober clime
This way of writing will appear exotic;
Pulci was sire of the half-serious rhyme,
Who sang when chivalry was more Quixotic,
And revell'd in the fancies of the time,
True knights, chaste dames, huge giants, kings despotic;
But all these, save the last, being obsolete,
I chose a modern subject as more meet.

VII

How I have treated it, I do not know;
Perhaps no better than they have treated me
Who have imputed such designs as show
Not what they saw, but what they wish'd to see:
But if it gives them pleasure, be it so;
This is a liberal age, and thoughts are free:
Meantime Apollo plucks me by the ear,
And tells me to resume my story here.

VIII

Young Juan and his lady-love were left
To their own hearts' most sweet society;
Even Time the pitiless in sorrow cleft
With his rude scythe such gentle bosoms; he
Sigh'd to behold them of their hours bereft,
Though foe to love; and yet they could not be
Meant to grow old, but die in happy spring,
Before one charm or hope had taken wing.

IX

Their faces were not made for wrinkles, their
Pure blood to stagnate, their great hearts to fail;
The blank grey was not made to blast their hair,
But like the climes that know nor snow nor hail
They were all summer: lightning might assail
And shiver them to ashes, but to trail
A long and snake-like life of dull decay
Was not for them — they had too little clay.

X

They were alone once more; for them to be
Thus was another Eden; they were never
Weary, unless when separate: the tree
Cut from its forest root of years — the river
Damm'd from its fountain — the child from the knee
And breast maternal wean'd at once for ever, —
Would wither less than these two torn apart;
Alas! there is no instinct like the heart —

XI

The heart — which may be broken: happy they!
Thrice fortunate! who of that fragile mould,
The precious porcelain of human clay,
Break with the first fall: they can ne'er behold
The long year link'd with heavy day on day,
And all which must be borne, and never told;
While life's strange principle will often lie
Deepest in those who long the most to die.

XII

'Whom the gods love die young,' was said of yore,
And many deaths do they escape by this:
The death of friends, and that which slays even more —
The death of friendship, love, youth, all that is,
Except mere breath; and since the silent shore
Awaits at last even those who longest miss
The old archer's shafts, perhaps the early grave
Which men weep over may be meant to save.

XIII

Haidée and Juan thought not of the dead —
The heavens, and earth, and air, seem'd made for them:
They found no fault with Time, save that he fled;
They saw not in themselves aught to condemn:
Each was the other's mirror, and but read
Joy sparkling in their dark eyes like a gem,
And knew such brightness was but the reflection
Of their exchanging glances of affection.

XIV

The gentle pressure, and the thrilling touch,
The least glance better understood than words,
Which still said all, and ne'er could say too much;
A language, too, but like to that of birds,
Known but to them, at least appearing such
As but to lovers a true sense affords;
Sweet playful phrases, which would seem absurd
To those who have ceased to hear such, or ne'er heard, —

XV

All these were theirs, for they were children still,
And children still they should have ever been;
They were not made in the real world to fill
A busy character in the dull scene,
But like two beings born from out a rill,
A nymph and her belovèd, all unseen
To pass their lives in fountains and on flowers,
And never know the weight of human hours.

XVI

Moons changing had roll'd on, and changeless found
Those their bright rise had lighted to such joys
As rarely they beheld throughout their round;
And these were not of the vain kind which cloys,
For theirs were buoyant spirits, never bound
By the mere senses; and that which destroys
Most love, possession, unto them appear'd
A thing which each endearment more endear'd.

XVII

Oh beautiful! and rare as beautiful!
But theirs was love in which the mind delights
To lose itself when the old world grows dull,
And we are sick of its hack sounds and sights,
Intrigues, adventures of the common school,
Its petty passions, marriages, and flights,
Where Hymen's torch but brands one strumpet more,
Whose husband only knows her not a wh—re.

XVIII

Hard words; harsh truth; a truth which many know.
Enough. — The faithful and the fairy pair,
Who never found a single hour too slow,
What was it made them thus exempt from care?
Young innate feelings all have felt below,
Which perish in the rest, but in them were
Inherent — what we mortals call romantic,
And always envy, though we deem it frantic.

XIX

This is in others a factitious state,
An opium dream of too much youth and reading,
But was in them their nature or their fate:
No novels e'er had set their young hearts bleeding,
For Haidée's knowledge was by no means great,
And Juan was a boy of saintly breeding;
So that there was no reason for their loves
More than for those of nightingales or doves.

XX

They gazed upon the sunset; 't is an hour
Dear unto all, but dearest to *their* eyes,
For it had made them what they were: the power
Of love had first o'erwhelm'd them from such skies,

When happiness had been their only dower,
And twilight saw them link'd in passion's ties;
Charm'd with each other, all things charm'd that brought
The past still welcome as the present thought.

XXI

I know not why, but in that hour to-night,
Even as they gazed, a sudden tremor came,
And swept, as 't were, across their hearts' delight,
Like the wind o'er a harp-string, or a flame,
When one is shook in sound, and one in sight;
And thus some boding flash'd through either frame,
And call'd from Juan's breast a faint low sigh,
While one new tear arose in Haidée's eye.

XXII

That large black prophet eye seem'd to dilate
And follow far the disappearing sun,
As if their last day of a happy date
With his broad, bright, and dropping orb were gone;
Juan gazed on her as to ask his fate —
He felt a grief, but knowing cause for none,
His glance inquired of hers for some excuse
For feelings causeless, or at least abstruse.

XXIII

She turn'd to him, and smiled, but in that sort
Which makes not others smile; then turn'd aside:
Whatever feeling shook her, it seem'd short,
And master'd by her wisdom or her pride;
When Juan spoke, too — it might be in sport —
Of this their mutual feeling, she replied —
'If it should be so, — but — it cannot be —
Or I at least shall not survive to see.'

XXIV

Juan would question further, but she press'd
His lip to hers, and silenced him with this,
And then dismiss'd the omen from her breast,
Defying augury with that fond kiss;
And no doubt of all methods 't is the best:
Some people prefer wine — 't is not amiss;
I have tried both; so those who would a part take
May choose between the headache and the heartache.

XXV

One of the two, according to your choice,
Woman or wine, you 'll have to undergo;
Both maladies are taxes on our joys:
But which to choose, I really hardly know;
And if I had to give a casting voice,
For both sides I could many reasons show,
And then decide, without great wrong to either,
It were much better to have both than neither.

XXVI

Juan and Haidée gazed upon each other
With swimming looks of speechless tenderness,
Which mix'd all feelings, friend, child, lover, brother,
All that the best can mingle and express
When two pure hearts are pour'd in one another,
And love too much, and yet can not love less;
But almost sanctify the sweet excess
By the immortal wish and power to bless.

XXVII

Mix'd in each other's arms, and heart in heart,
Why did they not then die? — they had lived too long
Should an hour come to bid them breathe apart;
Years could but bring them cruel things or wrong;
The world was not for them, nor the world's art
For beings passionate as Sappho's song;
Love was born *with* them, *in* them, so intense,
It was their very spirit — not a sense.

XXVIII

They should have lived together deep in woods,
Unseen as sings the nightingale; they were
Unfit to mix in these thick solitudes
Call'd social, haunts of Hate, and Vice, and Care:
How lonely every freeborn creature broods!
The sweetest song-birds nestle in a pair;
The eagle soars alone; the gull and crow
Flock o'er their carrion, just like men below.

XXIX

Now pillow'd cheek to cheek, in loving sleep,
Haidée and Juan their siesta took,
A gentle slumber, but it was not deep,
For ever and anon a something shook
Juan, and shuddering o'er his frame would creep;
And Haidée's sweet lips murmur'd like a brook
A wordless music, and her face so fair
Stirr'd with her dream, as rose-leaves with the air.

XXX

Or as the stirring of a deep clear stream
Within an Alpine hollow, when the wind
Walks o'er it, was she shaken by the dream,
The mystical usurper of the mind —
O'erpowering us to be whate'er may seem
Good to the soul which we no more can bind;
Strange state of being! (for 't is still to be)
Senseless to feel, and with seal'd eyes to see.

XXXI

She dream'd of being alone on the sea-shore,
Chain'd to a rock; she knew not how, but stir
She could not from the spot, and the loud roar
Grew, and each wave rose roughly, threatening her;
And o'er her upper lip they seem'd to pour,
Until she sobb'd for breath, and soon they were
Foaming o'er her lone head, so fierce and high —
Each broke to drown her, yet she could not die.

XXXII

Anon — she was released, and then she stray'd
O'er the sharp shingles with her bleeding feet,
And stumbled almost every step she made;
And something roll'd before her in a sheet,
Which she must still pursue howe'er afraid:
'T was white and indistinct, nor stopp'd to meet
Her glance nor grasp, for still she gazed, and grasp'd,
And ran, but it escaped her as she clasp'd.

XXXIII

The dream changed: — in a cave she stood, its walls
Were hung with marble icicles, the work
Of ages on its water-fretted halls,
Where waves might wash, and seals might breed and lurk;
Her hair was dripping, and the very balls
Of her black eyes seem'd turn'd to tears, and mirk
The sharp rocks look'd below each drop they caught,
Which froze to marble as it fell, — she thought.

XXXIV

And wet, and cold, and lifeless at her feet,
Pale as the foam that froth'd on his dead brow,
Which she essay'd in vain to clear (how sweet
Were once her cares, how idle seem'd they now!),
Lay Juan, nor could aught renew the beat
Of his quench'd heart; and the sea dirges low
Rang in her sad ears like a mermaid's song,
And that brief dream appear'd a life too long.

XXXV

And gazing on the dead, she thought his face
Faded, or alter'd into something new —
Like to her father's features, till each trace
More like and like to Lambro's aspect grew —
With all his keen worn look and Grecian grace;
And starting, she awoke, and what to view?

Oh! Powers of Heaven! what dark eye meets she there?
'T is — 't is her father's — fix'd upon the pair! 280

XXXVI

Then shrieking, she arose, and shrieking fell,
With joy and sorrow, hope and fear, to see
Him whom she deem'd a habitant where dwell
The ocean-buried, risen from death, to be
Perchance the death of one she loved too well:
Dear as her father had been to Haidée,
It was a moment of that awful kind —
I have seen such — but must not call to mind.

XXXVII

Up Juan sprung to Haidée's bitter shriek,
And caught her falling, and from off the wall 290
Snatch'd down his sabre, in hot haste to wreak
Vengeance on him who was the cause of all:
Then Lambro, who till now forbore to speak,
Smiled scornfully, and said, 'Within my call,
A thousand scimitars await the word;
Put up, young man, put up your silly sword.'

XXXVIII

And Haidée clung around him; 'Juan, 't is —
'T is Lambro — 't is my father! Kneel with me —
He will forgive us — yes — it must be — yes.
Oh! dearest father, in this agony 300
Of pleasure and of pain — even while I kiss
Thy garment's hem with transport, can it be
That doubt should mingle with my filial joy?
Deal with me as thou wilt, but spare this boy.'

XXXIX

High and inscrutable the old man stood,
Calm in his voice, and calm within his eye —
Not always signs with him of calmest mood:
He look'd upon her, but gave no reply;
Then turn'd to Juan, in whose cheek the blood
Oft came and went, as there resolved to die; 310
In arms, at least, he stood, in act to spring
On the first foe whom Lambro's call might bring.

XL

'Young man, your sword;' so Lambro once more said:
Juan replied, 'Not while this arm is free.'
The old man's cheek grew pale, but not with dread,
And drawing from his belt a pistol, he
Replied, 'Your blood be then on your own head.'
Then look'd close at the flint, as if to see
'T was fresh — for he had lately used the lock —
And next proceeded quietly to cock. 320

XLI

It has a strange quick jar upon the ear,
That cocking of a pistol, when you know
A moment more will bring the sight to bear
Upon your person, twelve yards off, or so;
A gentlemanly distance, not too near,
If you have got a former friend for foe;
But after being fired at once or twice,
The ear becomes more Irish, and less nice.

XLII

Lambro presented, and one instant more
Had stopp'd this Canto, and Don Juan's breath, 330
When Haidée threw herself her boy before;
Stern as her sire: 'On me,' she cried, 'let death
Descend — the fault is mine; this fatal shore
He found — but sought not. I have pledged my faith;
I love him — I will die with him: I knew
Your nature's firmness — know your daughter's too.'

XLIII

A minute past, and she had been all tears,
And tenderness, and infancy; but now

She stood as one who champion'd human fears —
Pale, statue-like, and stern, she woo'd the blow;
And tall beyond her sex, and their compeers,
She drew up to her height, as if to show
A fairer mark; and with a fix'd eye scann'd
Her father's face — but never stopp'd his hand.

XLIV

He gazed on her, and she on him; 't was strange
How like they look'd! the expression was the same;
Serenely savage, with a little change
In the large dark eye's mutual-darted flame;
For she, too, was as one who could avenge,
If cause should be — a lioness, though tame.
Her father's blood before her father's face
Boil'd up, and proved her truly of his race.

XLV

I said they were alike, their features and
Their stature, differing but in sex and years;
Even to the delicacy of their hand
There was resemblance, such as true blood wears;
And now to see them, thus divided, stand
In fix'd ferocity, when joyous tears
And sweet sensations should have welcomed both,
Show what the passions are in their full growth.

XLVI

The father paused a moment, then withdrew
His weapon, and replaced it; but stood still,
And looking on her, as to look her through,
'Not *I*,' he said, 'have sought this stranger's ill;
Not *I* have made this desolation: few
Would bear such outrage, and forbear to kill;
But I must do my duty — how thou hast
Done thine, the present vouches for the past.

XLVII

'Let him disarm; or, by my father's head,
His own shall roll before you like a ball!'
He raised his whistle, as the word he said,
And blew; another answer'd to the call,
And rushing in disorderly, though led,
And arm'd from boot to turban, one and all,
Some twenty of his train came, rank on rank;
He gave the word, — 'Arrest or slay the Frank.'

XLVIII

Then, with a sudden movement, he withdrew
His daughter; while compress'd within his clasp,
'Twixt her and Juan interposed the crew;
In vain she struggled in her father's grasp —
His arms were like a serpent's coil: then flew
Upon their prey, as darts an angry asp,
The file of pirates; save the foremost, who
Had fallen, with his right shoulder half cut through.

XLIX

The second had his cheek laid open; but
The third, a wary, cool old sworder, took
The blows upon his cutlass, and then put
His own well in; so well, ere you could look,
His man was floor'd, and helpless at his foot,
With the blood running like a little brook
From two smart sabre gashes, deep and red —
One on the arm, the other on the head.

L

And then they bound him where he fell, and bore
Juan from the apartment: with a sign
Old Lambro bade them take him to the shore,
Where lay some ships which were to sail at nine.
They laid him in a boat, and plied the oar
Until they reach'd some galliots, placed in line;
On board of one of these, and under hatches,
They stow'd him, with strict orders to the watches.

LI

The world is full of strange vicissitudes,
And here was one exceedingly unpleasant:

A gentleman so rich in the world's goods,
Handsome and young, enjoying all the present,
Just at the very time when he least broods
On such a thing is suddenly to sea sent,
Wounded and chain'd, so that he cannot move,
And all because a lady fell in love.

LII

Here I must leave him, for I grow pathetic,
Moved by the Chinese nymph of tears, green tea!
Than whom Cassandra was not more prophetic;
For if my pure libations exceed three,
I feel my heart become so sympathetic,
That I must have recourse to black Bohea:
'T is pity wine should be so deleterious,
For tea and coffee leave us much more serious,

LIII

Unless when qualified with thee, Cogniac!
Sweet Naïad of the Phlegethontic rill!
Ah! why the liver wilt thou thus attack,
And make, like other nymphs, thy lovers ill?
I would take refuge in weak punch, but *rack*
(In each sense of the word), whene'er I fill
My mild and midnight beakers to the brim,
Wakes me next morning with its synonym.

LIV

I leave Don Juan for the present, safe —
Not sound, poor fellow, but severely wounded;
Yet could his corporal pangs amount to half
Of those with which his Haidée's bosom bounded?
She was not one to weep, and rave, and chafe,
And then give way, subdued because surrounded;
Her mother was a Moorish maid, from Fez,
Where all is Eden, or a wilderness.

LV

There the large olive rains its amber store
In marble fonts; there grain, and flower, and fruit,
Gush from the earth until the land runs o'er;
But there, too, many a poison-tree has root,
And midnight listens to the lion's roar,
And long, long deserts scorch the camel's foot,
Or heaving whelm the helpless caravan;
And as the soil is, so the heart of man.

LVI

Afric is all the sun's, and as her earth
Her human clay is kindled; full of power
For good or evil, burning from its birth,
The Moorish blood partakes the planet's hour,
And like the soil beneath it will bring forth:
Beauty and love were Haidée's mother's dower;
But her large dark eye show'd deep Passion's force,
Though sleeping like a lion near a source.

LVII

Her daughter, temper'd with a milder ray,
Like summer clouds all silvery, smooth, and fair,
Till slowly charged with thunder they display
Terror to earth, and tempest to the air,
Had held till now her soft and milky way;
But overwrought with passion and despair,
The fire burst forth from her Numidian veins,
Even as the Simoom sweeps the blasted plains.

LVIII

The last sight which she saw was Juan's gore,
And he himself o'ermaster'd and cut down;
His blood was running on the very floor
Where late he trod, her beautiful, her own;
Thus much she view'd an instant and no more, —
Her struggles ceased with one convulsive groan;
On her sire's arm, which until now scarce held
Her writhing, fell she like a cedar fell'd.

LIX

A vein had burst, and her sweet lips' pure dyes
Were dabbled with the deep blood which ran o'er;

And her head droop'd as when the lily lies
O'ercharged with rain: her summon'd handmaids bore
Their lady to her couch with gushing eyes;
Of herbs and cordials they produced their store,
But she defied all means they could employ,
Like one life could not hold, nor death destroy.

LX

Days lay she in that state unchanged, though chill —
With nothing livid, still her lips were red;
She had no pulse, but death seem'd absent still;
No hideous sign proclaim'd her surely dead;
Corruption came not in each mind to kill
All hope; to look upon her sweet face bred
New thoughts of life, for it seem'd full of soul —
She had so much, earth could not claim the whole.

LXI

The ruling passion, such as marble shows
When exquisitely chisell'd, still lay there,
But fix'd as marble's unchanged aspect throws
O'er the fair Venus, but for ever fair;
O'er the Laocoon's all eternal throes,
And ever-dying Gladiator's air,
Their energy like life forms all their fame,
Yet looks not life, for they are still the same.

LXII

She woke at length, but not as sleepers wake,
Rather the dead, for life seem'd something new,
A strange sensation which she must partake
Perforce, since whatsoever met her view
Struck not on memory, though a heavy ache
Lay at her heart, whose earliest beat still true
Brought back the sense of pain without the cause,
For, for a while, the furies made a pause.

LXIII

She look'd on many a face with vacant eye,
On many a token without knowing what;
She saw them watch her without asking why,
And reck'd not who around her pillow sat;
Not speechless, though she spoke not; not a sigh
Relieved her thoughts; dull silence and quick chat
Were tried in vain by those who served; she gave
No sign, save breath, of having left the grave.

LXIV

Her handmaids tended, but she heeded not;
Her father watch'd, she turn'd her eyes away;
She recognized no being, and no spot,
However dear or cherish'd in their day;
They changed from room to room — but all forgot —
Gentle, but without memory she lay;
At length those eyes, which they would fain be weaning
Back to old thoughts, wax'd full of fearful meaning.

LXV

And then a slave bethought her of a harp;
The harper came, and tuned his instrument;
At the first notes, irregular and sharp,
On him her flashing eyes a moment bent,
Then to the wall she turn'd as if to warp
Her thoughts from sorrow through her heart re-sent;
And he begun a long low island song
Of ancient days, ere tyranny grew strong.

LXVI

Anon her thin wan fingers beat the wall
In time to his old tune; he changed the theme,
And sung of love; the fierce name struck through all
Her recollection; on her flash'd the dream
Of what she was, and is, if ye could call
To be so being; in a gushing stream
The tears rush'd forth from her o'erclouded brain,
Like mountain mists at length dissolved in rain.

LXVII

Short solace, vain relief! — thought came too quick,
And whirl'd her brain to madness; she arose
As one who ne'er had dwelt among the sick,
And flew at all she met, as on her foes;
But no one ever heard her speak or shriek,
Although her paroxysm drew towards its close; —
Hers was a phrensy which disdain'd to rave,
Even when they smote her, in the hope to save.

LXVIII

Yet she betray'd at times a gleam of sense;
Nothing could make her meet her father's face,
Though on all other things with looks intense
She gazed, but none she ever could retrace;
Food she refused, and raiment; no pretence
Avail'd for either; neither change of place,
Nor time, nor skill, nor remedy, could give her
Senses to sleep — the power seem'd gone for ever.

LXIX

Twelve days and nights she wither'd thus; at last,
Without a groan, or sigh, or glance, to show
A parting pang, the spirit from her past:
And they who watch'd her nearest could not know
The very instant, till the change that cast
Her sweet face into shadow, dull and slow,
Glazed o'er her eyes — the beautiful, the black —
Oh! to possess such lustre — and then lack!

LXX

She died, but not alone; she held within
A second principle of life, which might
Have dawn'd a fair and sinless child of sin;
But closed its little being without light,
And went down to the grave unborn, wherein
Blossom and bough lie wither'd with one blight;
In vain the dews of Heaven descend above
The bleeding flower and blasted fruit of love.

LXXI

Thus lived — thus died she; never more on her
Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was not made
Through years or moons the inner weight to bear,
Which colder hearts endure till they are laid
By age in earth: her days and pleasures were
Brief, but delightful — such as had not staid
Long with her destiny; but she sleeps well
By the sea-shore, whereon she loved to dwell.

LXXII

That isle is now all desolate and bare,
Its dwellings down, its tenants pass'd away;
None but her own and father's grave is there,
And nothing outward tells of human clay;
Ye could not know where lies a thing so fair,
No stone is there to show, no tongue to say
What was; no dirge, except the hollow sea's,
Mourns o'er the beauty of the Cyclades.

LXXIII

But many a Greek maid in a loving song
Sighs o'er her name; and many an islander
With her sire's story makes the night less long;
Valour was his, and beauty dwelt with her:
If she loved rashly, her life paid for wrong —
A heavy price must all pay who thus err,
In some shape; let none think to fly the danger,
For soon or late Love is his own avenger.

LXXIV

But let me change this theme which grows too sad,
And lay this sheet of sorrows on the shelf;
I don't much like describing people mad,
For fear of seeming rather touch'd myself —

Besides, I 've no more on this head to add;
And as my Muse is a capricious elf,
We 'll put about, and try another tack
With Juan, left half-kill'd some stanzas back.

LXXV

Wounded and fetter'd, 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,'
Some days and nights elapsed before that he
Could altogether call the past to mind;
And when he did, he found himself at sea,
Sailing six knots an hour before the wind;
The shores of Ilion lay beneath their lee —
Another time he might have liked to see 'em,
But now was not much pleased with Cape Sigæum.

LXXVI

There, on the green and village-cotted hill, is
(Flank'd by the Hellespont and by the sea)
Entomb'd the bravest of the brave, Achilles;
They say so (Bryant says the contrary):
And further downward, tall and towering still, is
The tumulus — of whom? Heaven knows! 't may be
Patroclus, Ajax, or Protesilaus —
All heroes, who if living still would slay us.

LXXVII

High barrows, without marble or a name,
A vast, untill'd, and mountain-skirted plain,
And Ida in the distance, still the same,
And old Scamander (if 't is he) remain;
The situation seems still form'd for fame —
A hundred thousand men might fight again
With ease; but where I sought for Ilion's walls,
The quiet sheep feeds, and the tortoise crawls;

LXXVIII

Troops of untended horses; here and there
Some little hamlets, with new names uncouth;
Some shepherds (unlike Paris) led to stare
A moment at the European youth
Whom to the spot their school-boy feelings bear;
A Turk, with beads in hand and pipe in mouth,
Extremely taken with his own religion,
Are what I found there — but the devil a Phrygian.

LXXIX

Don Juan, here permitted to emerge
From his dull cabin, found himself a slave;
Forlorn, and gazing on the deep blue surge,
O'ershadow'd there by many a hero's grave;
Weak still with loss of blood, he scarce could urge
A few brief questions; and the answers gave
No very satisfactory information
About his past or present situation.

LXXX

He saw some fellow captives, who appear'd
To be Italians, as they were in fact;
From them, at least, *their* destiny he heard,
Which was an odd one; a troop going to act
In Sicily (all singers, duly rear'd
In their vocation) had not been attack'd
In sailing from Livorno by the pirate, 639
But sold by the impresario at no high rate.

LXXXI

By one of these, the buffo of the party,
Juan was told about their curious case;
For although destined to the Turkish mart, he
Still kept his spirits up — at least his face;
The little fellow really look'd quite hearty,
And bore him with some gaiety and grace,
Showing a much more reconciled demeanour,
Than did the prima donna and the tenor.

LXXXII

In a few words he told their hapless story,
Saying, 'Our Machiavelian impresario,
Making a signal off some promontory, 651
Hail'd a strange brig — Corpo di Caio Mario!

We were transferr'd on board her in a hurry,
Without a single scudo of salario;
But if the Sultan has a taste for song,
We will revive our fortunes before long.

LXXXIII

'The prima donna, though a little old,
And haggard with a dissipated life,
And subject, when the house is thin, to cold,
Has some good notes; and then the tenor's wife,
With no great voice, is pleasing to behold;
Last carnival she made a deal of strife
By carrying off Count Cesare Cicogna
From an old Roman princess at Bologna.

LXXXIV

'And then there are the dancers; there 's the Nini,
With more than one profession, gains by all;
Then there 's that laughing slut the Pelegrini,
She, too, was fortunate last carnival,
And made at least five hundred good zecchini,
But spends so fast, she has not now a paul;
And then there 's the Grotesca — such a dancer!
Where men have souls or bodies she must answer.

LXXXV

'As for the figuranti, they are like
The rest of all that tribe; with here and there
A pretty person, which perhaps may strike,
The rest are hardly fitted for a fair;
There 's one, though tall and stiffer than a pike,
Yet has a sentimental kind of air
Which might go far, but she don't dance with vigour;
The more 's the pity, with her face and figure.

LXXXVI

'As for the men, they are a middling set;
The musico is but a crack'd old basin,
But being qualified in one way yet,
May the seraglio do to set his face in,
And as a servant some preferment get;
His singing I no further trust can place in:
From all the Pope makes yearly 't would perplex
To find three perfect pipes of the *third* sex.

LXXXVII

'The tenor's voice is spoilt by affectation,
And for the bass, the beast can only bellow;
In fact, he had no singing education,
An ignorant, noteless, timeless, tuneless fellow;
But being the prima donna's near relation,
Who swore his voice was very rich and mellow,
They hired him, though to hear him you 'd believe
An ass was practising recitative.

LXXXVIII

'T would not become myself to dwell upon
My own merits, and though young — I see, Sir — you
Have got a travell'd air, which speaks you one
To whom the opera is by no means new:
You 've heard of Raucocanti? — I 'm the man;
The time may come when you may hear me too;
You was not last year at the fair of Lugo,
But next, when I 'm engaged to sing there — do go.

LXXXIX

'Our baritone I almost had forgot,
A pretty lad, but bursting with conceit;
With graceful action, science not a jot,
A voice of no great compass, and not sweet,
He always is complaining of his lot,
Forsooth, scarce fit for ballads in the street;
In lovers' parts his passion more to breathe,
Having no heart to show, he shows his teeth.'

XC

Here Raucocanti's eloquent recital
Was interrupted by the pirate crew,
Who came at stated moments to invite all
The captives back to their sad berths; each threw

A rueful glance upon the waves (which bright all
From the blue skies derived a double blue,
Dancing all free and happy in the sun),
And then went down the hatchway one by one.

XCI

They heard next day — that in the Dardanelles,
Waiting for his Sublimity's firmān,
The most imperative of sovereign spells,
Which every body does without who can,
More to secure them in their naval cells,
Lady to lady, well as man to man,
Were to be chain'd and lotted out per couple,
For the slave market of Constantinople.

XCII

It seems when this allotment was made out,
There chanced to be an odd male, and odd female,
Who (after some discussion and some doubt,
If the soprano might be deem'd to be male,
They placed him o'er the women as a scout)
Were link'd together, and it happen'd the male
Was Juan, — who, an awkward thing at his age,
Pair'd off with a Bacchante blooming visage.

XCIII

With Raucocanti lucklessly was chain'd
The tenor; these two hated with a hate
Found only on the stage, and each more pain'd
With this his tuneful neighbour than his fate;
Sad strife arose, for they were so cross-grain'd,
Instead of bearing up without debate,
That each pull'd different ways with many an oath,
'Arcades ambo,' *id est* — blackguards both.

XCIV

Juan's companion was a Romagnole,
But bred within the March of old Ancona,
With eyes that look'd into the very soul
(And other chief points of a 'bella donna'),
Bright — and as black and burning as a coal;
And through her clear brunette complexion shone a
Great wish to please — a most attractive dower,
Especially when added to the power.

XCV

But all that power was wasted upon him,
For sorrow o'er each sense held stern command;
Her eye might flash on his, but found it dim;
And though thus chain'd, as natural her hand
Touch'd his, nor that — nor any handsome limb
(And she had some not easy to withstand)
Could stir his pulse, or make his faith feel brittle;
Perhaps his recent wounds might help a little.

XCVI

No matter; we should ne'er too much enquire,
But facts are facts: no knight could be more true,
And firmer faith no ladye-love desire;
We will omit the proofs, save one or two:
'T is said no one in hand 'can hold a fire
By thought of frosty Caucasus;' but few,
I really think; yet Juan's then ordeal
Was more triumphant, and not much less real.

XCVII

Here I might enter on a chaste description,
Having withstood temptation in my youth,
But hear that several people take exception
At the first two books having too much truth;
Therefore I 'll make Don Juan leave the ship soon,
Because the publisher declares, in sooth,
Through needles' eyes it easier for the camel is
To pass, than those two cantos into families.

XCVIII

'T is all the same to me; I 'm fond of yielding,
And therefore leave them to the purer page
Of Smollett, Prior, Ariosto, Fielding,
Who say strange things for so correct an age;
I once had great alacrity in wielding
My pen, and liked poetic war to wage,
And recollect the time when all this cant
Would have provoked remarks which now it shan't.

XCIX

As boys love rows, my boyhood liked a squabble;
But at this hour I wish to part in peace,
Leaving such to the literary rabble:
Whether my verse's fame be doom'd to cease
While the right hand which wrote it still is able,
Or of some centuries to take a lease,
The grass upon my grave will grow as long,
And sigh to midnight winds, but not to song.

C

Of poets who come down to us through distance
Of time and tongues, the foster-babes of Fame,
Life seems the smallest portion of existence;
Where twenty ages gather o'er a name,
'T is as a snowball which derives assistance
From every flake, and yet rolls on the same,
Even till an iceberg it may chance to grow;
But, after all, 't is nothing but cold snow.

CI

And so great names are nothing more than nominal,
And love of glory 's but an airy lust,
Too often in its fury overcoming all
Who would as 't were identify their dust
From out the wide destruction, which, entombing all,
Leaves nothing till 'the coming of the just'—
Save change: I've stood upon Achilles' tomb,
And heard Troy doubted; time will doubt of Rome.

CII

The very generations of the dead
Are swept away, and tomb inherits tomb,
Until the memory of an age is fled,
And, buried, sinks beneath its offspring's doom:
Where are the epitaphs our fathers read?
Save a few glean'd from the sepulchral gloom
Which once-named myriads nameless lie beneath,
And lose their own in universal death.

CIII

I canter by the spot each afternoon
Where perish'd in his fame the hero-boy,
Who lived too long for men, but died too soon
For human vanity, the young De Foix!
A broken pillar, not uncouthly hewn,
But which neglect is hastening to destroy,
Records Ravenna's carnage on its face,
While weeds and ordure rankle round the base.

CIV

I pass each day where Dante's bones are laid:
A little cupola, more neat than solemn,
Protects his dust, but reverence here is paid
To the bard's tomb, and not the warrior's column.
The time must come, when both alike decay'd,
The chieftain's trophy, and the poet's volume,
Will sink where lie the songs and wars of earth,
Before Pelides' death, or Homer's birth.

CV

With human blood that column was cemented,
With human filth that column is defiled,
As if the peasant's coarse contempt were vented
To show his loathing of the spot he soil'd:
Thus is the trophy used, and thus lamented
Should ever be those blood-hounds, from whose wild
Instinct of gore and glory earth has known
Those sufferings Dante saw in hell alone.

CVI

Yet there will still be bards: though fame is smoke,
Its fumes are frankincense to human thought;
And the unquiet feelings, which first woke
Song in the world, will seek what then they sought;
As on the beach the waves at last are broke,
Thus to their extreme verge the passions brought
Dash into poetry, which is but passion,
Or at least was so ere it grew a fashion.

CVII

If in the course of such a life as was
At once adventurous and contemplative,
Men, who partake all passions as they pass,
Acquire the deep and bitter power to give
Their images again as in a glass,
And in such colours that they seem to live;
You may do right forbidding them to show 'em,
But spoil (I think) a very pretty poem.

CVIII

Oh! ye, who make the fortunes of all books!
Benign Ceruleans of the second sex!
Who advertise new poems by your looks,
Your 'imprimatur' will ye not annex?
What! must I go to the oblivious cooks,
Those Cornish plunderers of Parnassian wrecks?
Ah! must I then the only minstrel be,
Proscribed from tasting your Castalian tea!

CIX

What! can I prove 'a lion' then no more?
A ball-room bard, a foolscap, hot-press darling?
To bear the compliments of many a bore,
And sigh, 'I can't get out,' like Yorick's starling;
Why then I 'll swear, as poet Wordy swore
(Because the world won't read him, always snarling),
That taste is gone, that fame is but a lottery,
Drawn by the blue-coat misses of a coterie.

CX

Oh! 'darkly, deeply, beautifully blue,'
As some one somewhere sings about the sky,
And I, ye learned ladies, say of you;
They say your stockings are so (Heaven knows why,
I have examined few pair of that hue);
Blue as the garters which serenely lie
Round the Patrician left-legs, which adorn
The festal midnight, and the levee morn.

CXI

Yet some of you are most seraphic creatures —
But times are alter'd since, a rhyming lover,
You read my stanzas, and I read your features:
And — but no matter, all those things are over;
Still I have no dislike to learned natures,
For sometimes such a world of virtues cover;
I knew one woman of that purple school,
The loveliest, chastest, best, but — quite a fool.

CXII

Humboldt, 'the first of travellers,' but not
The last, if late accounts be accurate,
Invented, by some name I have forgot,
As well as the sublime discovery's date,
An airy instrument, with which he sought
To ascertain the atmospheric state,
By measuring 'the *intensity of blue:*'
Oh, Lady Daphne! let me measure you!

CXIII

But to the narrative: — The vessel bound
With slaves to sell off in the capital,
After the usual process, might be found
At anchor under the seraglio wall;
Her cargo, from the plague being safe and sound,
Were landed in the market, one and all,
And there with Georgians, Russians, and Circassians,
Bought up for different purposes and passions.

CXIV

Some went off dearly; fifteen hundred dollars
For one Circassian, a sweet girl, were given,
Warranted virgin; beauty's brightest colours
Had deck'd her out in all the hues of heaven:

Her sale sent home some disappointed bawlers,
Who bade on till the hundreds reach'd eleven;
But when the offer went beyond, they knew
'T was for the Sultan, and at once withdrew.

CXV

Twelve negresses from Nubia brought a price
Which the West Indian market scarce would bring;
Though Wilberforce, at last, has made it twice
What 't was ere Abolition; and the thing
Need not seem very wonderful, for vice
Is always much more splendid than a king:
The virtues, even the most exalted, Charity,
Are saving — vice spares nothing for a rarity.

CXVI

But for the destiny of this young troop,
How some were bought by pachas, some by Jews,
How some to burdens were obliged to stoop,
And others rose to the command of crews
As renegadoes; while in hapless group,
Hoping no very old vizier might choose,
The females stood, as one by one they pick'd 'em,
To make a mistress, or fourth wife, or victim:

CXVII

All this must be reserved for further song;
Also our hero's lot, howe'er unpleasant
(Because this Canto has become too long),
Must be postponed discreetly for the present;
I 'm sensible redundancy is wrong,
But could not for the muse of me put less in 't:
And now delay the progress of Don Juan,
Till what is call'd in Ossian the fifth Duan.

CANTO THE FIFTH

I

When amatory poets sing their loves
In liquid lines mellifluously bland,
And pair their rhymes as Venus yokes her doves,
They little think what mischief is in hand;
The greater their success the worse it proves,
As Ovid's verse may give to understand;
Even Petrarch's self, if judged with due severity,
Is the Platonic pimp of all posterity.

II

I therefore do denounce all amorous writing,
Except in such a way as not to attract;
Plain — simple — short, and by no means inviting,
But with a moral to each error tack'd,
Form'd rather for instructing than delighting,
And with all passions in their turn attack'd;
Now, if my Pegasus should not be shod ill,
This poem will become a moral model.

III

The European with the Asian shore
Sprinkled with palaces; the ocean stream
Here and there studded with a seventy-four;
Sophia's cupola with golden gleam;
The cypress groves; Olympus high and hoar;
The twelve isles, and the more than I could dream,
Far less describe, present the very view
Which charm'd the charming Mary Montagu.

IV

I have a passion for the name of 'Mary,'
For once it was a magic sound to me;
And still it half calls up the realms of fairy,
Where I beheld what never was to be;
All feelings changed, but this was last to vary,
A spell from which even yet I am not quite free:
But I grow sad — and let a tale grow cold,
Which must not be pathetically told.

V

The wind swept down the Euxine, and the wave
Broke foaming o'er the blue Symplegades;
'T is a grand sight from off 'the Giant's Grave'
To watch the progress of those rolling seas

Between the Bosphorus, as they lash and lave
Europe and Asia, you being quite at ease;
There 's not a sea the passenger e'er pukes in,
Turns up more dangerous breakers than the Euxine.

VI

'T was a raw day of Autumn's bleak beginning,
When nights are equal, but not so the days;
The Parcæ then cut short the further spinning
Of seamen's fates, and the loud tempests raise
The waters, and repentance for past sinning
In all, who o'er the great deep take their ways:
They vow to amend their lives, and yet they don't;
Because if drown'd, they can't — if spared, they won't.

VII

A crowd of shivering slaves of every nation,
And age, and sex, were in the market ranged;
Each bevy with the merchant in his station:
Poor creatures! their good looks were sadly changed.
All save the blacks seem'd jaded with vexation,
From friends, and home, and freedom far estranged;
The negroes more philosophy display'd, —
Used to it, no doubt, as eels are to be flay'd.

VIII

Juan was juvenile, and thus was full,
As most at his age are, of hope and health;
Yet I must own he looked a little dull,
And now and then a tear stole down by stealth;
Perhaps his recent loss of blood might pull
His spirit down; and then the loss of wealth,
A mistress, and such comfortable quarters,
To be put up for auction amongst Tartars,

IX

Were things to shake a stoic; ne'ertheless,
Upon the whole his carriage was serene:
His figure, and the splendour of his dress,
Of which some gilded remnants still were seen,
Drew all eyes on him, giving them to guess
He was above the vulgar by his mien;
And then, though pale, he was so very handsome;
And then — they calculated on his ransom.

X

Like a backgammon board the place was dotted
With whites and blacks, in groups on show for sale,
Though rather more irregularly spotted:
Some bought the jet, while others chose the pale.
It chanced amongst the other people lotted,
A man of thirty rather stout and hale,
With resolution in his dark grey eye,
Next Juan stood, till some might choose to buy.

XI

He had an English look; that is, was square
In make, of a complexion white and ruddy,
Good teeth, with curling rather dark brown hair,
And, it might be from thought or toil or study,
An open brow a little mark'd with care:
One arm had on a bandage rather bloody;
And there he stood with such *sang-froid*, that greater
Could scarce be shown even by a mere spectator.

XII

But seeing at his elbow a mere lad,
Of a high spirit evidently, though
At present weigh'd down by a doom which had
O'erthrown even men, he soon began to show
A kind of blunt compassion for the sad
Lot of so young a partner in the woe,
Which for himself he seem'd to deem no worse
Than any other scrape, a thing of course.

XIII

'My boy!' said he, 'amidst this motley crew
Of Georgians, Russians, Nubians, and what not,

All ragamuffins differing but in hue,
With whom it is our luck to cast our lot, 100
The only gentlemen seem I and you;
So let us be acquainted, as we ought:
If I could yield you any consolation,
'T would give me pleasure. — Pray, what is your nation?'

XIV

When Juan answer'd — 'Spanish!' he replied,
'I thought, in fact, you could not be a Greek;
Those servile dogs are not so proudly eyed:
Fortune has play'd you here a pretty freak,
But that 's her way with all men, till they 're tried;
But never mind, — she 'll turn, perhaps, next week; 110
She has served me also much the same as you,
Except that I have found it nothing new.'

XV

'Pray, sir,' said Juan, 'if I may presume,
What brought you here?' — 'Oh! nothing very rare —
Six Tartars and a drag-chain.' 'To this doom
But what conducted, if the question's fair,
Is that which I would learn.' — 'I served for some
Months with the Russian army here and there,
And taking lately, by Suwarrow's bidding,
A town, was ta'en myself instead of Widdin.' 120

XVI

'Have you no friends?' — 'I had — but, by God's blessing,
Have not been troubled with them lately. Now
I have answer'd all your questions without pressing,
And you an equal courtesy should show.'
'Alas!' said Juan, ''t were a tale distressing,
And long besides.' — 'Oh! if 't is really so,
You 're right on both accounts to hold your tongue;
A sad tale saddens doubly, when 't is long.

XVII

'But droop not: Fortune at your time of life,
Although a female moderately fickle, 130
Will hardly leave you (as she 's not your wife)
For any length of days in such a pickle.
To strive, too, with our fate were such a strife
As if the corn-sheaf should oppose the sickle:
Men are the sport of circumstances, when
The circumstances seem the sport of men.'

XVIII

''T is not,' said Juan, 'for my present doom
I mourn, but for the past; — I loved a maid:' —
He paused, and his dark eye grew full of gloom;
A single tear upon his eyelash staid 140
A moment, and then dropp'd; 'but to resume,
'T is not my present lot, as I have said,
Which I deplore so much; for I have borne
Hardships which have the hardiest overworn,

XIX

'On the rough deep. But this last blow —' and here
He stopp'd again, and turn'd away his face.
'Ay,' quoth his friend, 'I thought it would appear
That there had been a lady in the case;
And these are things which ask a tender tear,
Such as I, too, would shed if in your place: 150
I cried upon my first wife's dying day,
And also when my second ran away:

XX

'My third —' — 'Your third!' quoth Juan, turning round;
'You scarcely can be thirty: have you three?'
'No — only two at present above ground:
Surely 't is nothing wonderful to see
One person thrice in holy wedlock bound!'
'Well, then, your third,' said Juan; 'what did she?

She did not run away, too, — did she, sir?'
'No, faith.' — 'What then?' — 'I ran away from her.'

XXI

'You take things coolly, sir,' said Juan. 'Why,'
Replied the other, 'what can a man do?
There still are many rainbows in your sky,
But mine have vanish'd. All, when life is new,
Commence with feelings warm, and prospects high;
But time strips our illusions of their hue,
And one by one in turn, some grand mistake
Casts off its bright skin yearly like the snake.

XXII

''T is true, it gets another bright and fresh,
Or fresher, brighter; but the year gone through,
This skin must go the way, too, of all flesh,
Or sometimes only wear a week or two; —
Love 's the first net which spreads its deadly mesh;
Ambition, Avarice, Vengeance, Glory, glue
The glittering lime-twigs of our latter days,
Where still we flutter on for pence or praise.'

XXIII

'All this is very fine, and may be true,'
Said Juan; 'but I really don't see how
It betters present times with me or you.'
'No?' quoth the other; 'yet you will allow
By setting things in their right point of view,
Knowledge, at least, is gain'd; for instance, now,
We know what slavery is, and our disasters
May teach us better to behave when masters.'

XXIV

'Would we were masters now, if but to try
Their present lessons on our Pagan friends here,'
Said Juan, — swallowing a heart-burning sigh:
'Heaven help the scholar whom his fortune sends here!'
'Perhaps we shall be one day, by and by,'
Rejoin'd the other, 'when our bad luck mends here;
Meantime (yon old black eunuch seems to eye us)
I wish to G—d that somebody would buy us!

XXV

'But after all, what *is* our present state?
'T is bad, and may be better — all men's lot:
Most men are slaves, none more so than the great,
To their own whims and passions, and what not;
Society itself, which should create
Kindness, destroys what little we had got:
To feel for none is the true social art
Of the world's stoics — men without a heart.'

XXVI

Just now a black old neutral personage
Of the third sex stept up, and peering over
The captives, seem'd to mark their looks and age,
And capabilities, as to discover
If they were fitted for the purposed cage:
No lady e'er is ogled by a lover,
Horse by a blackleg, broadcloth by a tailor,
Fee by a counsel, felon by a jailor,

XXVII

As is a slave by his intended bidder.
'T is pleasant purchasing our fellow-creatures;
And all are to be sold, if you consider
Their passions, and are dext'rous; some by features
Are bought up, others by a warlike leader,
Some by a place — as tend their years or natures;
The most by ready cash — but all have prices,
From crowns to kicks, according to their vices.

XXVIII

The eunuch, having eyed them o'er with care,
Turn'd to the merchant, and begun to bid

First but for one, and after for the pair;
They haggled, wrangled, swore, too — so they did !
As though they were in a mere Christian fair
Cheapening an ox, an ass, a lamb, or kid;
So that their bargain sounded like a battle
For this superior yoke of human cattle.

XXIX

At last they settled into simple grumbling,
And pulling out reluctant purses, and
Turning each piece of silver o'er, and tumbling
Some down, and weighing others in their hand,
And by mistake sequins with paras jumbling,
Until the sum was accurately scann'd,
And then the merchant giving change, and signing
Receipts in full, began to think of dining.

XXX

I wonder if his appetite was good ?
Or, if it were, if also his digestion ?
Methinks at meals some odd thoughts might intrude,
And conscience ask a curious sort of question,
About the right divine how far we should
Sell flesh and blood. When dinner has opprest one,
I think it is perhaps the gloomiest hour
Which turns up out of the sad twenty-four.

XXXI

Voltaire says 'No:' he tells you that Candide
Found life most tolerable after meals;
He 's wrong — unless man were a pig, indeed,
Repletion rather adds to what he feels,
Unless he 's drunk, and then no doubt he 's freed
From his own brain's oppression while it reels.
Of food I think with Philip's son, or rather
Ammon's (ill pleased with one world and one father);

XXXII

I think with Alexander, that the act
Of eating, with another act or two,
Makes us feel our mortality in fact
Redoubled; when a roast and a ragout,
And fish, and soup, by some side dishes back'd,
Can give us either pain or pleasure, who
Would pique himself on intellects, whose use
Depends so much upon the gastric juice ?

XXXIII

The other evening ('t was on Friday last) —
This is a fact and no poetic fable —
Just as my great coat was about me cast,
My hat and gloves still lying on the table,
I heard a shot — 't was eight o'clock scarce past —
And, running out as fast as I was able,
I found the military commandant
Stretch'd in the street, and able scarce to pant.

XXXIV

Poor fellow ! for some reason, surely bad,
They had slain him with five slugs; and left him there
To perish on the pavement: so I had
Him borne into the house and up the stair,
And stripp'd and look'd to — But why should I add
More circumstances ? vain was every care;
The man was gone: in some Italian quarrel
Kill'd by five bullets from an old gun-barrel.

XXXV

I gazed upon him, for I knew him well;
And though I have seen many corpses, never
Saw one, whom such an accident befell,
So calm; though pierced through stomach, heart, and liver,
He seem'd to sleep, — for you could scarcely tell
(As he bled inwardly, no hideous river
Of gore divulged the cause) that he was dead:
So as I gazed on him, I thought or said —

XXXVI

'Can this be death ? then what is life or death ?
Speak !' but he spoke not: 'Wake !' but still he slept : —
'But yesterday and who had mightier breath ?
A thousand warriors by his word were kept

In awe: he said, as the centurion saith,
"Go," and he goeth; "come," and forth he stepp'd.
The trump and bugle till he spake were dumb —
And now nought left him but the muffled drum.'

XXXVII

And they who waited once and worshipp'd — they
With their rough faces throng'd about the bed
To gaze once more on the commanding clay
Which for the last, though not the first, time bled:
And such an end! that he who many a day
Had faced Napoleon's foes until they fled, —
The foremost in the charge or in the sally,
Should now be butcher'd in a civic alley.

XXXVIII

The scars of his old wounds were near his new,
Those honourable scars which brought him fame;
And horrid was the contrast to the view —
But let me quit the theme; as such things claim
Perhaps even more attention than is due
From me: I gazed (as oft I have gazed the same)
To try if I could wrench aught out of death
Which should confirm, or shake, or make a faith;

XXXIX

But it was all a mystery. Here we are,
And there we go: — but *where?* five bits of lead,
Or three, or two, or one, send very far!
And is this blood, then, form'd but to be shed?
Can every element our elements mar?
And air — earth — water — fire live — and we dead?
We whose minds comprehend all things? No more;
But let us to the story as before.

XL

The purchaser of Juan and acquaintance
Bore off his bargains to a gilded boat,
Embark'd himself and them, and off they went thence
As fast as oars could pull and water float;
They look'd like persons being led to sentence,
Wondering what next, till the caïque was brought
Up in a little creek below a wall
O'ertopp'd with cypresses, dark-green and tall.

XLI

Here their conductor tapping at the wicket
Of a small iron door, 't was open'd, and
He led them onward, first through a low thicket
Flank'd by large groves, which tower'd on either hand:
They almost lost their way, and had to pick it —
For night was closing ere they came to land.
The eunuch made a sign to those on board,
Who row'd off, leaving them without a word.

XLII

As they were plodding on their winding way
Through orange bowers, and jasmine, and so forth
(Of which I might have a good deal to say,
There being no such profusion in the North
Of oriental plants, 'et cetera,'
But that of late your scribblers think it worth
Their while to rear whole hotbeds in *their* works
Because one poet travell'd 'mongst the Turks) —

XLIII

As they were threading on their way, there came
Into Don Juan's head a thought, which he
Whisper'd to his companion: — 't was the same
Which might have then occurr'd to you or me.
'Methinks,' said he, 'it would be no great shame
If we should strike a stroke to set us free;

Let's knock that old black fellow on the head,
And march away — 't were easier done than said.'

XLIV

'Yes,' said the other, 'and when done, what then?
How get out? how the devil got we in?
And when we once were fairly out, and when
From Saint Bartholomew we have saved our skin,
To-morrow 'd see us in some other den,
And worse off than we hitherto have been;
Besides, I 'm hungry, and just now would take,
Like Esau, for my birthright a beef-steak.

XLV

'We must be near some place of man's abode; —
For the old negro's confidence in creeping,
With his two captives, by so queer a road,
Shows that he thinks his friends have not been sleeping;
A single cry would bring them all abroad:
'T is therefore better looking before leaping —
And there, you see, this turn has brought us through,
By Jove, a noble palace! — lighted too.'

XLVI

It was indeed a wide extensive building
Which open'd on their view, and o'er the front
There seem'd to be besprent a deal of gilding
And various hues, as is the Turkish wont, —
A gaudy taste; for they are little skill'd in
The arts of which these lands were once the font:
Each villa on the Bosphorus looks a screen
New painted, or a pretty opera-scene.

XLVII

And nearer as they came, a genial savour
Of certain stews, and roast-meats, and pilaus,
Things which in hungry mortals' eyes find favour,
Made Juan in his harsh intentions pause,
And put himself upon his good behaviour:
His friend, too, adding a new saving clause,
Said, 'In Heaven's name let 's get some supper now,
And then I 'm with you, if you 're for a row.'

XLVIII

Some talk of an appeal unto some passion,
Some to men's feelings, others to their reason;
The last of these was never much the fashion,
For reason thinks all reasoning out of season.
Some speakers whine, and others lay the lash on,
But more or less continue still to tease on,
With arguments according to their 'forte;'
But no one dreams of ever being short. —

XLIX

But I digress: of all appeals, — although
I grant the power of pathos, and of gold,
Of beauty, flattery, threats, a shilling, — no
Method 's more sure at moments to take hold
Of the best feelings of mankind, which grow
More tender, as we every day behold,
Than that all-softening, overpowering knell,
The tocsin of the soul — the dinner-bell.

L

Turkey contains no bells, and yet men dine;
And Juan and his friend, albeit they heard
No Christian knoll to table, saw no line
Of lackeys usher to the feast prepared,
Yet smelt roast-meat, beheld a huge fire shine,
And cooks in motion with their clean arms bared,
And gazed around them to the left and right
With the prophetic eye of appetite.

LI

And giving up all notions of resistance,
They follow'd close behind their sable guide,
Who little thought that his own crack'd existence
Was on the point of being set aside:

He motion'd them to stop at some small distance,
And knocking at the gate, 't was open'd wide,
And a magnificent large hall display'd
The Asian pomp of Ottoman parade.

LII

I won't describe; description is my forte,
But every fool describes in these bright days
His wondrous journey to some foreign court,
And spawns his quarto, and demands your praise —
Death to his publisher, to him 't is sport;
While Nature, tortured twenty thousand ways,
Resigns herself with exemplary patience
To guide-books, rhymes, tours, sketches, illustrations.

LIII

Along this hall, and up and down, some, squatted
Upon their hams, were occupied at chess;
Others in monosyllable talk chatted,
And some seem'd much in love with their own dress.
And divers smoked superb pipes decorated
With amber mouths of greater price or less;
And several strutted, others slept, and some
Prepared for supper with a glass of rum.

LIV

As the black eunuch enter'd with his brace
Of purchased Infidels, some raised their eyes
A moment without slackening from their pace;
But those who sate ne'er stirr'd in anywise:
One or two stared the captives in the face,
Just as one views a horse to guess his price;
Some nodded to the negro from their station,
But no one troubled him with conversation.

LV

He leads them through the hall, and, without stopping,
On through a farther range of goodly rooms,
Splendid but silent, save in *one*, where, dropping,
A marble fountain echoes through the glooms
Of night which robe the chamber, or where popping
Some female head most curiously presumes
To thrust its black eyes through the door or lattice,
As wondering what the devil a noise that is.

LVI

Some faint lamps gleaming from the lofty walls
Gave light enough to hint their farther way,
But not enough to show the imperial halls,
In all the flashing of their full array;
Perhaps there's nothing — I'll not say appals,
But saddens more by night as well as day,
Than an enormous room without a soul
To break the lifeless splendour of the whole.

LVII

Two or three seem so little, *one* seems nothing:
In deserts, forests, crowds, or by the shore,
There solitude, we know, has her full growth in
The spots which were her realms for evermore;
But in a mighty hall or gallery, both in
More modern buildings and those built of yore,
A kind of death comes o'er us all alone,
Seeing what 's meant for many with but one.

LVIII

A neat, snug study on a winter's night,
A book, friend, single lady, or a glass
Of claret, sandwich, and an appetite,
Are things which make an English evening pass;
Though *certes* by no means so grand a sight
As is a theatre lit up by gas.
I pass my evenings in long galleries solely,
And that 's the reason I 'm so melancholy.

LIX

Alas! man makes that great which makes him little:
I grant you in a church 't is very well:

What speaks of Heaven should by no means be brittle,
But strong and lasting, till no tongue can tell
Their names who rear'd it; but huge houses fit ill —
And huge tombs worse — mankind, since Adam fell:
Methinks the story of the tower of Babel
Might teach them this much better than I 'm able.

LX

Babel was Nimrod's hunting-box, and then
A town of gardens, walls, and wealth amazing,
Where Nabuchadonosor, king of men,
Reign'd, till one summer's day he took to grazing,
And Daniel tamed the lions in their den,
The people's awe and admiration raising;
'T was famous, too, for Thisbe and for Pyramus,
And the calumniated queen Semiramis.

LXI

That injured Queen by chroniclers so coarse
Has been accused (I doubt not by conspiracy)
Of an improper friendship for her horse
(Love, like religion, sometimes runs to heresy):
This monstrous tale had probably its source
(For such exaggerations here and there I see)
In writing 'Courser' by mistake for 'Courier:'
I wish the case could come before a jury here.

LXII

But to resume, — should there be (what may not
Be in these days?) some infidels, who don't,
Because they can't find out the very spot
Of that same Babel, or because they won't
(Though Claudius Rich, Esquire, some bricks has got,
And written lately two memoirs upon't),
Believe the Jews, those unbelievers, who
Must be believed, though they believe not you,

LXIII

Yet let them think that Horace has exprest
Shortly and sweetly the masonic folly
Of those, forgetting the great place of rest,
Who give themselves to architecture wholly;
We know where things and men must end at best:
A moral (like all morals) melancholy,
And 'Et sepulchri immemor struis domos'
Shows that we build when we should but entomb us.

LXIV

At last they reach'd a quarter most retired,
Where echo woke as if from a long slumber;
Though full of all things which could be desired,
One wonder'd what to do with such a number
Of articles which nobody required;
Here wealth had done its utmost to encumber
With furniture an exquisite apartment,
Which puzzled Nature much to know what Art meant.

LXV

It seem'd, however, but to open on
A range or suite of further chambers, which
Might lead to heaven knows where; but in this one
The movables were prodigally rich:
Sofas 't was half a sin to sit upon,
So costly were they; carpets every stitch
Of workmanship so rare, they made you wish
You could glide o'er them like a golden fish.

LXVI

The black, however, without hardly deigning
A glance at that which wrapt the slaves in wonder,
Trampled what they scarce trod for fear of staining,
As if the milky way their feet was under
With all its stars; and with a stretch attaining
A certain press or cupboard niched in yonder —

In that remote recess which you may see —
Or if you don't the fault is not in me, —

LXVII

I wish to be perspicuous; and the black,
I say, unlocking the recess, pull'd forth
A quantity of clothes fit for the back
Of any Mussulman, whate'er his worth;
And of variety there was no lack —
And yet, though I have said there was no dearth,
He chose himself to point out what he thought
Most proper for the Christians he had bought.

LXVIII

The suit he thought most suitable to each
Was, for the elder and the stouter, first
A Candiote cloak, which to the knee might reach,
And trousers not so tight that they would burst,
But such as fit an Asiatic breech;
A shawl, whose folds in Cashmire had been nurst,
Slippers of saffron, dagger rich and handy;
In short, all things which form a Turkish Dandy.

LXIX

While he was dressing, Baba, their black friend,
Hinted the vast advantages which they
Might probably attain both in the end,
If they would but pursue the proper way
Which fortune plainly seem'd to recommend;
And then he added, that he needs must say,
''T would greatly tend to better their condition,
If they would condescend to circumcision.

LXX

'For his own part, he really should rejoice
To see them true believers, but no less
Would leave his proposition to their choice.'
The other, thanking him for this excess
Of goodness, in thus leaving them a voice
In such a trifle, scarcely could express
'Sufficiently' (he said) 'his approbation
Of all the customs of this polish'd nation.

LXXI

'For his own share — he saw but small objection
To so respectable an ancient rite;
And, after swallowing down a slight refection,
For which he own'd a present appetite,
He doubted not a few hours of reflection
Would reconcile him to the business quite.'
'Will it?' said Juan, sharply: 'Strike me dead,
But they as soon shall circumcise my head!

LXXII

'Cut off a thousand heads, before —' — 'Now, pray,'
Replied the other, 'do not interrupt:
You put me out in what I had to say.
Sir! — as I said, as soon as I have supt,
I shall perpend if your proposal may
Be such as I can properly accept;
Provided always your great goodness still
Remits the matter to our own free-will.'

LXXIII

Baba eyed Juan, and said, 'Be so good
As dress yourself —' and pointed out a suit
In which a Princess with great pleasure would
Array her limbs; but Juan standing mute,
As not being in a masquerading mood,
Gave it a slight kick with his Christian foot;
And when the old negro told him to 'Get ready,'
Replied, 'Old gentleman, I'm not a lady.'

LXXIV

'What you may be, I neither know nor care,'
Said Baba; 'but pray do as I desire:
I have no more time nor many words to spare.'
'At least,' said Juan, 'sure I may enquire
The cause of this odd travesty?' — 'Forbear,'
Said Baba, 'to be curious; 't will transpire,
No doubt, in proper place, and time, and season:
I have no authority to tell the reason.'

LXXV

'Then if I do,' said Juan, 'I'll be —' — 'Hold!'
Rejoin'd the negro, 'pray be not provoking;
This spirit's well, but it may wax too bold,
And you will find us not too fond of joking.'
'What, sir!' said Juan, 'shall it e'er be told
That I unsex'd my dress?' But Baba, stroking
The things down, said, 'Incense me, and I call
Those who will leave you of no sex at all.

LXXVI

'I offer you a handsome suit of clothes:
A woman's, true; but then there is a cause
Why you should wear them.' — 'What, though my soul loathes
The effeminate garb?' — thus, after a short pause,
Sigh'd Juan, muttering also some slight oaths,
'What the devil shall I do with all this gauze?'
Thus he profanely term'd the finest lace
Which e'er set off a marriage-morning face.

LXXVII

And then he swore; and, sighing, on he slipp'd
A pair of trousers of flesh-colour'd silk;
Next with a virgin zone he was equipp'd,
Which girt a slight chemise as white as milk;
But tugging on his petticoat, he tripp'd,
Which — as we say — or, as the Scotch say, *whilk*
(The rhyme obliges me to this; sometimes
Monarchs are less imperative than rhymes) —

LXXVIII

Whilk, which (or what you please), was owing to
His garment's novelty, and his being awkward:
And yet at last he managed to get through
His toilet, though no doubt a little backward:
The negro Baba help'd a little too,
When some untoward part of raiment stuck hard;
And, wrestling both his arms into a gown,
He paused, and took a survey up and down.

LXXIX

One difficulty still remain'd — his hair
Was hardly long enough; but Baba found
So many false long tresses all to spare,
That soon his head was most completely crown'd,
After the manner then in fashion there;
And this addition with such gems was bound
As suited the *ensemble* of his toilet,
While Baba made him comb his head and oil it.

LXXX

And now being femininely all array'd,
With some small aid from scissors, paint, and tweezers,
He look'd in almost all respects a maid,
And Baba smilingly exclaim'd, 'You see, sirs,
A perfect transformation here display'd;
And now, then, you must come along with me, sirs,
That is — the Lady:' clapping his hands twice,
Four blacks were at his elbow in a trice.

LXXXI

'You, sir,' said Baba, nodding to the one,
'Will please to accompany those gentlemen
To supper; but you, worthy Christian nun,
Will follow me: no trifling, sir; for when
I say a thing, it must at once be done.
What fear you? think you this a lion's den?
Why, 't is a palace; where the truly wise
Anticipate the Prophet's paradise.

LXXXII

'You fool! I tell you no one means you harm.'
'So much the better,' Juan said, 'for them;
Else they shall feel the weight of this my arm,
Which is not quite so light as you may deem.
I yield thus far; but soon will break the charm
If any take me for that which I seem:

So that I trust for everybody's sake,
That this disguise may lead to no mistake.'

LXXXIII

'Blockhead! come on, and see,' quoth Baba; while
Don Juan, turning to his comrade, who
Though somewhat grieved, could scarce forbear a smile
Upon the metamorphosis in view, —
'Farewell!' they mutually exclaim'd: 'this soil
Seems fertile in adventures strange and new;
One's turn'd half Mussulman, and one a maid,
By this old black enchanter's unsought aid.'

LXXXIV

'Farewell!' said Juan: 'should we meet no more,
I wish you a good appetite.' — 'Farewell!'
Replied the other; 'though it grieves me sore;
When we next meet we'll have a tale to tell:
We needs must follow when Fate puts from shore.
Keep your good name; though Eve herself once fell.'
'Nay,' quoth the maid, 'the Sultan's self shan't carry me,
Unless his highness promises to marry me.'

LXXXV

And thus they parted, each by separate doors;
Baba led Juan onward room by room
Through glittering galleries and o'er marble floors,
Till a gigantic portal through the gloom,
Haughty and huge, along the distance lowers;
And wafted far arose a rich perfume:
It seem'd as though they came upon a shrine,
For all was vast, still, fragrant, and divine.

LXXXVI

The giant door was broad, and bright, and high,
Of gilded bronze, and carved in curious guise;
Warriors thereon were battling furiously;
Here stalks the victor, there the vanquish'd lies;
There captives led in triumph droop the eye,
And in perspective many a squadron flies:
It seems the work of times before the line
Of Rome transplanted fell with Constantine.

LXXXVII

This massy portal stood at the wide close
Of a huge hall, and on its either side
Two little dwarfs, the least you could suppose,
Were sate, like ugly imps, as if allied
In mockery to the enormous gate which rose
O'er them in almost pyramidic pride:
The gate so splendid was in all its *features*,
You never thought about those little creatures,

LXXXVIII

Until you nearly trod on them, and then
You started back in horror to survey
The wondrous hideousness of those small men,
Whose colour was not black, nor white, nor grey,
But an extraneous mixture, which no pen
Can trace, although perhaps the pencil may;
They were mis-shapen pigmies, deaf and dumb —
Monsters, who cost a no less monstrous sum.

LXXXIX

Their duty was — for they were strong, and though
They look'd so little, did strong things at times —
To ope this door, which they could really do,
The hinges being as smooth as Rogers' rhymes;
And now and then, with tough strings of the bow,
As is the custom of those Eastern climes,
To give some rebel Pacha a cravat;
For mutes are generally used for that.

XC

They spoke by signs — that is, not spoke at all;
And looking like two incubi, they glared

As Baba with his fingers made them fall
  To heaving back the portal folds: it scared
Juan a moment, as this pair so small
  With shrinking serpent optics on him stared;
It was as if their little looks could poison
Or fascinate whome'er they fix'd their eyes on.

XCI

Before they enter'd, Baba paused to hint
  To Juan some slight lessons as his guide:
'If you could just contrive,' he said, 'to stint
  That somewhat manly majesty of stride,
'T would be as well, and (though there 's not much in 't)
  To swing a little less from side to side,
Which has at times an aspect of the oddest;—
And also could you look a little modest,

XCII

''T would be convenient; for these mutes have eyes
  Like needles, which may pierce those petticoats;
And if they should discover your disguise,
  You know how near us the deep Bosphorus floats;
And you and I may chance, ere morning rise,
  To find our way to Marmora without boats,
Stitch'd up in sacks — a mode of navigation
A good deal practised here upon occasion.'

XCIII

With this encouragement, he led the way
  Into a room still nobler than the last;
A rich confusion form'd a disarray
  In such sort, that the eye along it cast
Could hardly carry anything away,
  Object on object flash'd so bright and fast;
A dazzling mass of gems, and gold, and glitter,
Magnificently mingled in a litter.

XCIV

Wealth had done wonders — taste not much; such things
  Occur in Orient palaces, and even
In the more chasten'd domes of Western kings
  (Of which I have also seen some six or seven),
Where I can't say or gold or diamond flings
  Great lustre, there is much to be forgiven;
Groups of bad statues, tables, chairs, and pictures,
On which I cannot pause to make my strictures.

XCV

In this imperial hall, at distance lay
  Under a canopy, and there reclined
Quite in a confidential queenly way,
  A lady; Baba stopp'd, and kneeling sign'd
To Juan, who though not much used to pray,
  Knelt down by instinct, wondering in his mind,
What all this meant: while Baba bow'd and bended
His head, until the ceremony ended.

XCVI

The lady rising up with such an air
  As Venus rose with from the wave, on them
Bent like an antelope a Paphian pair
  Of eyes, which put out each surrounding gem;
And raising up an arm as moonlight fair,
  She sign'd to Baba, who first kiss'd the hem
Of her deep purple robe, and speaking low,
Pointed to Juan who remain'd below.

XCVII

Her presence was as lofty as her state;
  Her beauty of that overpowering kind,
Whose force description only would abate:
  I 'd rather leave it much to your own mind,
Than lessen it by what I could relate
  Of forms and features; it would strike you blind
Could I do justice to the full detail;
So, luckily for both, my phrases fail.

XCVIII

Thus much however I may add, — her years
  Were ripe, they might make six-and-twenty springs;

But there are forms which Time to touch forbears,
And turns aside his scythe to vulgar things,
Such as was Mary's Queen of Scots; true — tears
And love destroy; and sapping sorrow wrings
Charms from the charmer, yet some never grow
Ugly; for instance — Ninon de l'Enclos

XCIX

She spake some words to her attendants, who
Composed a choir of girls, ten or a dozen,
And were all clad alike; like Juan, too,
Who wore their uniform, by Baba chosen;
They form'd a very nymph-like looking crew,
Which might have call'd Diana's chorus 'cousin,'
As far as outward show may correspond;
I won't be bail for anything beyond.

C

They bow'd obeisance and withdrew, retiring,
But not by the same door through which came in
Baba and Juan, which last stood admiring,
At some small distance, all he saw within
This strange saloon, much fitted for inspiring
Marvel and praise; for both or none things win;
And I must say, I ne'er could see the very
Great happiness of the 'Nil Admirari.'

CI

'Not to admire is all the art I know
(Plain truth, dear Murray, needs few flowers of speech)
To make men happy, or to keep them so'
(So take it in the very words of Creech) —
Thus Horace wrote we all know long ago;
And thus Pope quotes the precept to re-teach
From his translation; but had *none admired*,
Would Pope have sung, or Horace been inspired?

CII

Baba, when all the damsels were withdrawn,
Motion'd to Juan to approach, and then
A second time desired him to kneel down,
And kiss the lady's foot; which maxim when
He heard repeated, Juan with a frown
Drew himself up to his full height again,
And said, 'It grieved him, but he could not stoop
To any shoe, unless it shod the Pope.'

CIII

Baba, indignant at this ill-timed pride,
Made fierce remonstrances, and then a threat
He mutter'd (but the last was given aside)
About a bow-string — quite in vain; not yet
Would Juan bend, though 't were to Mahomet's bride:
There 's nothing in the world like *etiquette*
In kingly chambers or imperial halls,
As also at the race and county balls.

CIV

He stood like Atlas, with a world of words
About his ears, and nathless would not bend:
The blood of all his line's Castilian lords
Boil'd in his veins, and rather than descend
To stain his pedigree a thousand swords
A thousand times of him had made an end;
At length perceiving the '*foot*' could not stand,
Baba proposed that he should kiss the hand.

CV

Here was an honourable compromise,
A half-way house of diplomatic rest,
Where they might meet in much more peaceful guise;
And Juan now his willingness exprest
To use all fit and proper courtesies,
Adding, that this was commonest and best,
For through the South the custom still commands
The gentleman to kiss the lady's hands.

CVI

And he advanced, though with but a bad grace,
Though on more *thorough-bred* or fairer fingers

No lips e'er left their transitory trace;
On such as these the lip too fondly lingers,
And for one kiss would fain imprint a brace,
As you will see, if she you love shall bring hers
In contact; and sometimes even a fair stranger's
An almost twelvemonth's constancy endangers.

CVII

The lady eyed him o'er and o'er, and bade
Baba retire, which he obey'd in style,
As if well used to the retreating trade;
And taking hints in good part all the while,
He whisper'd Juan not to be afraid,
And looking on him with a sort of smile,
Took leave, with such a face of satisfaction
As good men wear who have done a virtuous action.

CVIII

When he was gone, there was a sudden change:
I know not what might be the lady's thought,
But o'er her bright brow flash'd a tumult strange,
And into her clear cheek the blood was brought,
Blood-red as sunset summer clouds which range
The verge of Heaven; and in her large eyes wrought,
A mixture of sensations might be scann'd,
Of half voluptuousness and half command.

CIX

Her form had all the softness of her sex,
Her features all the sweetness of the devil,
When he put on the cherub to perplex
Eve, and paved (God knows how) the road to evil;
The sun himself was scarce more free from specks
Than she from aught at which the eye could cavil;
Yet, somehow, there was something somewhere wanting,
As if she rather *order'd* than was *granting*.

CX

Something imperial, or imperious, threw
A chain o'er all she did; that is, a chain
Was thrown as 't were about the neck of you, —
And rapture's self will seem almost a pain
With aught which looks like despotism in view:
Our souls at least are free, and 't is in vain
We would against them make the flesh obey —
The spirit in the end will have its way.

CXI

Her very smile was haughty, though so sweet;
Her very nod was not an inclination;
There was a self-will even in her small feet,
As though they were quite conscious of her station —
They trod as upon necks; and to complete
Her state (it is the custom of her nation),
A poniard deck'd her girdle, as the sign
She was a sultan's bride (thank Heaven, not mine!).

CXII

'To hear and to obey' had been from birth
The law of all around her; to fulfil
All phantasies which yielded joy or mirth,
Had been her slaves' chief pleasure, as her will;
Her blood was high, her beauty scarce of earth:
Judge, then, if her caprices e'er stood still;
Had she but been a Christian, I 've a notion
We should have found out the 'perpetual motion.'

CXIII

Whate'er she saw and coveted was brought;
Whate'er she did *not* see, if she supposed
It might be seen, with diligence was sought,
And when 't was found straightway the bargain closed;
There was no end unto the things she bought,
Nor to the trouble which her fancies caused;
Yet even her tyranny had such a grace,
The women pardon'd all except her face.

CXIV

Juan, the latest of her whims, had caught
Her eye in passing on his way to sale;
She order'd him directly to be bought,
And Baba, who had ne'er been known to fail
In any kind of mischief to be wrought,
At all such auctions knew how to prevail:
She had no prudence, but he had; and this
Explains the garb which Juan took amiss.

CXV

His youth and features favour'd the disguise,
And, should you ask how she, a sultan's bride,
Could risk or compass such strange phantasies,
This I must leave sultanas to decide:
Emperors are only husbands in wives' eyes,
And kings and consorts oft are mystified,
As we may ascertain with due precision,
Some by experience, others by tradition.

CXVI

But to the main point, where we have been tending:—
She now conceived all difficulties past,
And deem'd herself extremely condescending
When, being made her property at last,
Without more preface, in her blue eyes blending
Passion and power, a glance on him she cast,
And merely saying, 'Christian, canst thou love?'
Conceived that phrase was quite enough to move.

CXVII

And so it was, in proper time and place;
But Juan, who had still his mind o'erflowing
With Haidée's isle and soft Ionian face,
Felt the warm blood, which in his face was glowing,
Rush back upon his heart, which fill'd apace,
And left his cheeks as pale as snowdrops blowing;
These words went through his soul like Arab-spears,
So that he spoke not, but burst into tears.

CXVIII

She was a good deal shock'd; not shock'd at tears,
For women shed and use them at their liking;
But there is something when man's eye appears
Wet, still more disagreeable and striking;
A woman's tear-drop melts, a man's half sears,
Like molten lead, as if you thrust a pike in
His heart to force it out, for (to be shorter)
To them 't is a relief, to us a torture.

CXIX

And she would have consoled, but knew not how:
Having no equals, nothing which had e'er
Infected her with sympathy till now,
And never having dreamt what 't was to bear
Aught of a serious, sorrowing kind, although
There might arise some pouting petty care
To cross her brow, she wonder'd how so near
Her eyes another's eye could shed a tear.

CXX

But nature teaches more than power can spoil,
And, when a *strong* although a strange sensation
Moves — female hearts are such a genial soil
For kinder feelings, whatsoe'er their nation,
They naturally pour the 'wine and oil,'
Samaritans in every situation;
And thus Gulbeyaz, though she knew not why,
Felt an odd glistening moisture in her eye.

CXXI

But tears must stop like all things else; and soon
Juan, who for an instant had been moved
To such a sorrow by the intrusive tone
Of one who dared to ask if 'he *had* loved,'
Call'd back the stoic to his eyes, which shone
Bright with the very weakness he reproved;

And although sensitive to beauty, he
Felt most indignant still at not being free.

CXXII

Gulbeyaz, for the first time in her days,
Was much embarrass'd, never having met
In all her life with aught save prayers and praise;
And as she also risk'd her life to get
Him whom she meant to tutor in love's ways
Into a comfortable tête-à-tête,
To lose the hour would make her quite a martyr,
And they had wasted now almost a quarter.

CXXIII

I also would suggest the fitting time
To gentlemen in any such like case,
That is to say in a meridian clime —
With us there is more law given to the chase,
But here a small delay forms a great crime:
So recollect that the extremest grace
Is just two minutes for your declaration —
A moment more would hurt your reputation.

CXXIV

Juan's was good; and might have been still better,
But he had got Haidée into his head:
However strange, he could not yet forget her,
Which made him seem exceedingly ill-bred.
Gulbeyaz, who look'd on him as her debtor
For having had him to her palace led,
Began to blush up to the eyes, and then
Grow deadly pale, and then blush back again.

CXXV

At length, in an imperial way, she laid
Her hand on his, and bending on him eyes
Which needed not an empire to persuade,
Look'd into his for love, where none replies:
Her brow grew black, but she would not upbraid,
That being the last thing a proud woman tries;
She rose, and pausing one chaste moment, threw
Herself upon his breast, and there she grew.

CXXVI

This was an awkward test, as Juan found,
But he was steel'd by sorrow, wrath, and pride:
With gentle force her white arms he unwound,
And seated her all drooping by his side,
Then rising haughtily he glanced around,
And looking coldly in her face, he cried,
'The prison'd eagle will not pair, nor I
Serve a Sultana's sensual phantasy.

CXXVII

'Thou ask'st if I can love? be this the proof
How much I *have* loved — that I love not *thee!*
In this vile garb, the distaff, web, and woof,
Were fitter for me: Love is for the free!
I am not dazzled by this splendid roof,
Whate'er thy power, and great it seems to be;
Heads bow, knees bend, eyes watch around a throne,
And hands obey — our hearts are still our own.'

CXXVIII

This was a truth to us extremely trite;
Not so to her, who ne'er had heard such things:
She deem'd her least command must yield delight,
Earth being only made for queens and kings.
If hearts lay on the left side or the right
She hardly knew, to such perfection brings
Legitimacy its born votaries, when
Aware of their due royal rights o'er men.

CXXIX

Besides, as has been said, she was so fair
As even in a much humbler lot had made
A kingdom or confusion anywhere,
And also, as may be presumed, she laid
Some stress on charms, which seldom are, if e'er,
By their possessors thrown into the shade:
She thought hers gave a double 'right divine;'
And half of that opinion 's also mine.

CXXX

Remember, or (if you can not) imagine,
Ye, who have kept your chastity when young,

While some more desperate dowager has been waging
Love with you, and been in the dog-days stung
By your refusal, recollect her raging!
Or recollect all that was said or sung
On such a subject; then suppose the face
Of a young downright beauty in this case.

CXXXI

Suppose, — but you already have supposed,
The spouse of Potiphar, the Lady Booby,
Phædra, and all which story has disclosed
Of good examples; pity that so few by
Poets and private tutors are exposed,
To educate — ye youth of Europe — you by!
But when you have supposed the few we know,
You can't suppose Gulbeyaz' angry brow.

CXXXII

A tigress robb'd of young, a lioness,
Or any interesting beast of prey,
Are similes at hand for the distress
Of ladies who can not have their own way;
But though my turn will not be served with less,
These don't express one half what I should say:
For what is stealing young ones, few or many,
To cutting short their hopes of having any?

CXXXIII

The love of offspring 's nature's general law,
From tigresses and cubs to ducks and ducklings;
There 's nothing whets the beak, or arms the claw
Like an invasion of their babes and sucklings;
And all who have seen a human nursery, saw
How mothers love their children's squalls and chucklings;
This strong extreme effect (to tire no longer
Your patience) shows the cause must still be stronger.

CXXXIV

If I said fire flash'd from Gulbeyaz' eyes,
'T were nothing — for her eyes flash'd always fire;
Or said her cheeks assumed the deepest dyes,
I should but bring disgrace upon the dyer,
So supernatural was her passion's rise;
For ne'er till now she knew a check'd desire:
Even ye who know what a check'd woman is
(Enough, God knows!) would much fall short of this.

CXXXV

Her rage was but a minute's, and 't was well —
A moment's more had slain her; but the while
It lasted 't was like a short glimpse of hell:
Nought 's more sublime than energetic bile,
Though horrible to see yet grand to tell,
Like ocean warring 'gainst a rocky isle;
And the deep passions flashing through her form
Made her a beautiful embodied storm.

CXXXVI

A vulgar tempest 't were to a typhoon
To match a common fury with her rage,
And yet she did not want to reach the moon,
Like moderate Hotspur on the immortal page;
Her anger pitch'd into a lower tune,
Perhaps the fault of her soft sex and age —
Her wish was but to 'kill, kill, kill,' like Lear's,
And then her thirst of blood was quench'd in tears.

CXXXVII

A storm it raged, and like the storm it pass'd,
Pass'd without words — in fact she could not speak;
And then her sex's shame broke in at last,
A sentiment till then in her but weak,
But now it flow'd in natural and fast,
As water through an unexpected leak;
For she felt humbled — and humiliation
Is sometimes good for people in her station.

CXXXVIII

It teaches them that they are flesh and blood,
It also gently hints to them that others,

Although of clay, are yet not quite of mud;
That urns and pipkins are but fragile brothers,
And works of the same pottery, bad or good,
Though not all born of the same sires and mothers:
It teaches — Heaven knows only what it teaches,
But sometimes it may mend, and often reaches.

CXXXIX

Her first thought was to cut off Juan's head;
Her second, to cut only his — acquaintance;
Her third, to ask him where he had been bred;
Her fourth, to rally him into repentance;
Her fifth, to call her maids and go to bed;
Her sixth, to stab herself; her seventh, to sentence
The lash to Baba: — but her grand resource
Was to sit down again, and cry of course.

CXL

She thought to stab herself, but then she had
The dagger close at hand, which made it awkward;
For Eastern stays are little made to pad,
So that a poniard pierces if 't is stuck hard:
She thought of killing Juan — but, poor lad!
Though he deserved it well for being so backward,
The cutting off his head was not the art
Most likely to attain her aim — his heart.

CXLI

Juan was moved; he had made up his mind
To be impaled, or quarter'd as a dish
For dogs, or to be slain with pangs refined,
Or thrown to lions, or made baits for fish,
And thus heroically stood resign'd,
Rather than sin — except to his own wish:
But all his great preparatives for dying
Dissolved like snow before a woman crying.

CXLII

As through his palms Bob Acres' valour oozed,
So Juan's virtue ebb'd, I know not how;
And first he wonder'd why he had refused;
And then, if matters could be made up now;
And next his savage virtue he accused,
Just as a friar may accuse his vow,
Or as a dame repents her of her oath,
Which mostly ends in some small breach of both.

CXLIII

So he began to stammer some excuses;
But words are not enough in such a matter,
Although you borrow'd all that e'er the muses
Have sung, or even a Dandy's dandiest chatter,
Or all the figures Castlereagh abuses;
Just as a languid smile began to flatter
His peace was making, but before he ventured
Further, old Baba rather briskly enter'd.

CXLIV

'Bride of the Sun! and Sister of the Moon!'
('T was thus he spake) 'and Empress of the Earth!
Whose frown would put the spheres all out of tune,
Whose smile makes all the planets dance with mirth,
Your slave brings tidings — he hopes not too soon —
Which your sublime attention may be worth:
The Sun himself has sent me like a ray,
To hint that he is coming up this way.'

CXLV

'Is it,' exclaim'd Gulbeyaz, 'as you say?
I wish to heaven he would not shine till morning!
But bid my women form the milky way.
Hence, my old comet! give the stars due warning —
And, Christian! mingle with them as you may,
And as you 'd have me pardon your past scorning — '
Here they were interrupted by a humming
Sound, and then by a cry, 'The Sultan 's coming!'

CXLVI

First came her damsels, a decorous file,
And then his Highness' eunuchs, black and white;
The train might reach a quarter of a mile:
His majesty was always so polite
As to announce his visits a long while
Before he came, especially at night;
For being the last wife of the Emperour,
She was of course the favorite of the four.

CXLVII

His Highness was a man of solemn port,
Shawl'd to the nose, and bearded to the eyes,
Snatch'd from a prison to preside at court,
His lately bowstrung brother caused his rise;
He was as good a sovereign of the sort
As any mention'd in the histories
Of Cantemir, or Knōllēs, where few shine
Save Solyman, the glory of their line.

CXLVIII

He went to mosque in state, and said his prayers
With more than 'Oriental scrupulosity;'
He left to his vizier all state affairs,
And show'd but little royal curiosity:
I know not if he had domestic cares —
No process proved connubial animosity;
Four wives and twice five hundred maids, unseen,
Were ruled as calmly as a Christian queen.

CXLIX

If now and then there happen'd a slight slip,
Little was heard of criminal or crime;
The story scarcely pass'd a single lip —
The sack and sea had settled all in time,
From which the secret nobody could rip:
The Public knew no more than does this rhyme;
No scandals made the daily press a curse —
Morals were better, and the fish no worse.

CL

He saw with his own eyes the moon was round,
Was also certain that the earth was square,
Because he had journey'd fifty miles, and found
No sign that it was circular anywhere;
His empire also was without a bound:
'T is true, a little troubled here and there,
By rebel pachas, and encroaching giaours,
But then they never came to 'the Seven Towers;'

CLI

Except in shape of envoys, who were sent
To lodge there when a war broke out, according
To the true law of nations, which ne'er meant
Those scoundrels, who have never had a sword in
Their dirty diplomatic hands, to vent
Their spleen in making strife, and safely wording
Their lies, yclep'd despatches, without risk or
The singeing of a single inky whisker.

CLII

He had fifty daughters and four dozen sons,
Of whom all such as came of age were stow'd,
The former in a palace, where like nuns
They lived till some Bashaw was sent abroad,
When she, whose turn it was, was wed at once,
Sometimes at six years old — though it seems odd,
'T is true; the reason is, that the Bashaw
Must make a present to his sire in law.

CLIII

His sons were kept in prison, till they grew
Of years to fill a bowstring or the throne,
One or the other, but which of the two
Could yet be known unto the fates alone;
Meantime the education they went through
Was princely, as the proofs have always shown:
So that the heir apparent still was found
No less deserving to be hang'd than crown'd.

CLIV

His majesty saluted his fourth spouse
With all the ceremonies of his rank,
Who clear'd her sparkling eyes and smooth'd her brows,
As suits a matron who has play'd a prank;
These must seem doubly mindful of their vows,
To save the credit of their breaking bank:

To no men are such cordial greetings given
As those whose wives have made them fit for heaven.

CLV

His Highness cast around his great black eyes,
And looking, as he always look'd, perceived
Juan amongst the damsels in disguise,
At which he seem'd no whit surprised nor grieved
But just remark'd with air sedate and wise,
While still a fluttering sigh Gulbeyaz heaved,
'I see you've bought another girl; 't is pity
That a mere Christian should be half so pretty.'

CLVI

This compliment, which drew all eyes upon
The new-bought virgin, made her blush and shake.
Her comrades, also, thought themselves undone:
Oh! Mahomet! that his majesty should take
Such notice of a giaour, while scarce to one
Of them his lips imperial ever spake!
There was a general whisper, toss, and wriggle,
But etiquette forbade them all to giggle.

CLVII

The Turks do well to shut — at least, sometimes —
The women up, because, in sad reality,
Their chastity in these unhappy climes
Is not a thing of that astringent quality
Which in the North prevents precocious crimes,
And makes our snow less pure than our morality;
The sun, which yearly melts the polar ice,
Has quite the contrary effect on vice.

CLVIII

Thus in the East they are extremely strict,
And *Wedlock* and a *Padlock* mean the same;
Excepting only when the former 's pick'd
It ne'er can be replaced in proper frame;
Spoilt, as a pipe of claret is when prick'd:
But then their own Polygamy 's to blame;
Why don't they knead two virtuous souls for life
Into that moral centaur, man and wife?

CLIX

Thus far our chronicle; and now we pause,
Though not for want of matter; but 't is time
According to the ancient epic laws,
To slacken sail, and anchor with our rhyme.
Let this fifth canto meet with due applause,
The sixth shall have a touch of the sublime;
Meanwhile, as Homer sometimes sleeps, perhaps
You 'll pardon to my muse a few short naps.

PREFACE

TO CANTOS VI, VII, AND VIII

The details of the siege of Ismail in two of the following cantos (*i. e.* the seventh and eighth) are taken from a French Work, entitled *Histoire de la Nouvelle Russie.* Some of the incidents attributed to Don Juan really occurred, particularly the circumstance of his saving the infant, which was the actual case of the late Duc de Richelieu, then a young volunteer in the Russian service, and afterward the founder and benefactor of Odessa, where his name and memory can never cease to be regarded with reverence.

In the course of these cantos, a stanza or two will be found relative to the late Marquis of Londonderry, but written some time before his decease. Had that person's oligarchy died with him, they would have been suppressed; as it is, I am aware of nothing in the manner of his death or of his life to prevent the free expression of the opinions of all whom his whole existence was consumed in endeavouring to enslave. That he was an amiable man in *private* life, may or may not be true: but with this the public have nothing to do; and as to lamenting his death, it will be time enough when Ireland has ceased to mourn for his birth. As a minister, I, for one of millions, looked upon him as the most despotic in intention, and the weakest in intellect, that ever tyrannised over a country. It is the first time indeed since the Normans that England has been insulted by a *minister* (at least) who could not speak English, and that parliament permitted itself to be dictated to in the language of Mrs. Malaprop.

Of the manner of his death little need be said, except that if a poor radical, such as Waddington or Watson, had cut his throat, he would have been buried in a cross-road, with the usual appurtenances of the stake and mallet. But the minister was an elegant lunatic — a sentimental suicide — he merely cut the 'carotid artery' (blessings on their learning!) and lo! the pageant and the Abbey! and 'the syllables of dolour yelled forth' by the newspapers — and the harangue of the Coroner in a eulogy over the bleeding body of the deceased (an Anthony worthy of such a Cæsar) — and the nauseous and atrocious cant of a degraded crew of conspirators against all that is sincere and honourable. In his death he was necessarily one of two things by the *law*[1] — a felon or a madman — and in either case no great subject for panegyric. In his life he was — what all the world knows, and half of it will feel for years to come, unless his death prove a 'moral lesson' to the surviving Sejani[2] of Europe. It may at least serve as some consolation to the nations, that their oppressors are not happy, and in some instances judge so justly of their own actions as to anticipate the sentence of mankind. — Let us hear no more of this man; and let Ireland remove the ashes of her Grattan from the sanctuary of Westminster. Shall the patriot of humanity repose by the Werther of politics!!!

With regard to the objections which have been made on another score to the already published cantos of this poem, I shall content myself with two quotations from Voltaire: — 'La pudeur s'est enfuite des cœurs, et s'est refugiée sur les lèvres' . . . 'Plus les mœurs sont dépravés, plus les expressions deviennent mesurées; on croit regagner en langage ce qu'on a perdu en vertu.'

This is the real fact, as applicable to the degraded and hypocritical mass which leavens the present English generation, and is the only answer they deserve. The hackneyed and lavished title of Blasphemer — which, with Radical, Liberal, Jacobin, Reformer, etc., are the changes which the hirelings are daily ringing in the ears of those who will listen — should be welcome to all who recollect on *whom* it was originally bestowed. Socrates and Jesus Christ were put to death publicly as *blasphemers*, and so have been and may be many who dare to oppose the most notorious abuses of the name of God and the mind of man. But persecution is not refutation, nor even triumph: the 'wretched infidel,' as he is called, is probably happier in his prison than the proudest of his assailants. With his opinions I have nothing to do — they may be right or wrong — but he has suffered for them, and that very suffering for conscience' sake will make more proselytes to deism than the example of heterodox[1] Prelates to Christianity, suicide statesmen to oppression, or over-pensioned homicides to the impious alliance which insults the world with the name of 'Holy!' I have no wish to trample on the dishonoured or the dead; but it would be well if the adherents to the classes from whence those persons sprung should abate a little of the *cant* which is the crying sin of this double-dealing and false-speaking time of selfish spoilers, and — but enough for the present.

Pisa, *July*, 1822.

CANTO THE SIXTH

I

'There is a tide in the affairs of men
  Which, — taken at the flood,' — you know the rest,
And most of us have found it now and then;
  At least we think so, though but few have guess'd
The moment, till too late to come again.
  But no doubt every thing is for the best —
Of which the surest sign is in the end:
When things are at the worst they sometimes mend.

II

There is a tide in the affairs of women
  Which, taken at the flood, leads — God knows where:
Those navigators must be able seamen
  Whose charts lay down its current to a hair;
Not all the reveries of Jacob Behmen
  With its strange whirls and eddies can compare:

---

[1] I say by the *law* of the *land* — the laws of humanity judge more gently; but as the legitimates have always the *law* in their mouths, let them here make the most of it.

[2] From this number must be excepted Canning. Canning is a genius, almost a universal one, an orator, a wit, a poet, a statesman; and no man of talent can long pursue the path of his late predecessor, Lord C. If ever man saved his country, Canning *can*, but *will* he? I, for one, hope so.

[1] When Lord Sandwich said 'he did not know the difference between orthodoxy and heterodoxy,' Warburton, the bishop, replied, 'Orthodoxy, my lord, is *my doxy*, and heterodoxy is *another man's* doxy.' A prelate of the present day has discovered, it seems, a *third* kind of doxy, which has not greatly exalted in the eyes of the elect that which Bentham calls 'Church-of-Englandism.'

Men with their heads reflect on this and that —
But women with their hearts on heaven knows what!

III

And yet a headlong, headstrong, downright she,
Young, beautiful, and daring — who would risk
A throne, the world, the universe, to be
Beloved in her own way, and rather whisk
The stars from out the sky, than not be free
As are the billows when the breeze is brisk —
Though such a she 's a devil (if that there be one),
Yet she would make full many a Manichean.

IV

Thrones, worlds, et cetera, are so oft upset
By commonest ambition, that when passion
O'erthrows the same, we readily forget,
Or at the least forgive, the loving rash one.
If Anthony be well remember'd yet,
'T is not his conquests keep his name in fashion,
But Actium, lost for Cleopatra's eyes,
Outbalances all Cæsar's victories.

V

He died at fifty for a queen of forty;
I wish their years had been fifteen and twenty,
For then wealth, kingdoms, worlds are but a sport — I
Remember when, though I had no great plenty
Of worlds to lose, yet still, to pay my court, I
Gave what I had — a heart: as the world went, I
Gave what was worth a world; for worlds could never
Restore me those pure feelings, gone forever.

VI

'T was the boy's 'mite,' and, like the 'widow's,' may
Perhaps be weigh'd hereafter, if not now;
But whether such things do or do not weigh,
All who have loved, or love, will still allow
Life has nought like it. God is love, they say,
And Love 's a god, or was before the brow
Of earth was wrinkled by the sins and tears
Of — but Chronology best knows the years.

VII

We left our hero and third heroine in
A kind of state more awkward than uncommon,
For gentlemen must sometimes risk their skin
For that sad tempter, a forbidden woman:
Sultans too much abhor this sort of sin,
And don't agree at all with the wise Roman,
Heroic, stoic Cato, the sententious,
Who lent his lady to his friend Hortensius.

VIII

I know Gulbeyaz was extremely wrong;
I own it, I deplore it, I condemn it;
But I detest all fiction even in song,
And so must tell the truth, howe'er you blame it.
Her reason being weak, her passions strong,
She thought that her lord's heart (even could she claim it)
Was scarce enough; for he had fifty-nine
Years, and a fifteen-hundredth concubine.

IX

I am not, like Cassio, 'an arithmetician,'
But by 'the bookish theoric' it appears,
If 't is summ'd up with feminine precision,
That, adding to the account his Highness' years,
The fair Sultana err'd from inanition;
For, were the Sultan just to all his dears,
She could but claim the fifteen-hundredth part
Of what should be monopoly — the heart.

X

It is observed that ladies are litigious
Upon all legal objects of possession,
And not the least so when they are religious,
Which doubles what they think of the transgression:
With suits and prosecutions they besiege us,
As the tribunals show through many a session,

When they suspect that any one goes shares
In that to which the law makes them sole heirs.

XI

Now, if this holds good in a Christian land,
The heathen also, though with lesser latitude,
Are apt to carry things with a high hand,
And take what kings call 'an imposing attitude,'
And for their rights connubial make a stand,
When their liege husbands treat them with ingratitude:
And as four wives must have quadruple claims,
The Tigris hath its jealousies like Thames.

XII

Gulbeyaz was the fourth, and (as I said)
The favourite; but what 's favour amongst four?
Polygamy may well be held in dread,
Not only as a sin, but as a *bore:*
Most wise men, with *one* moderate woman wed,
Will scarcely find philosophy for more;
And all (except Mahometans) forbear
To make the nuptial couch a 'Bed of Ware.'

XIII

His Highness, the sublimest of mankind, —
So styled according to the usual forms
Of every monarch, till they are consign'd
To those sad hungry jacobins the worms,
Who on the very loftiest kings have dined, —
His Highness gazed upon Gulbeyaz' charms,
Expecting all the welcome of a lover
(A 'Highland welcome' all the wide world over).

XIV

Now here we should distinguish; for howe'er
Kisses, sweet words, embraces, and all that,
May look like what is — neither here nor there,
They are put on as easily as a hat,
Or rather bonnet, which the fair sex wear,
Trimm'd either heads or hearts to decorate,
Which form an ornament, but no more part
Of heads, than their caresses of the heart.

XV

A slight blush, a soft tremor, a calm kind
Of gentle feminine delight, and shown
More in the eyelids than the eyes, resign'd
Rather to hide what pleases most unknown,
Are the best tokens (to a modest mind)
Of love, when seated on his loveliest throne,
A sincere woman's breast, — for over-*warm*
Or over-*cold* annihilates the charm.

XVI

For over-warmth, if false, is worse than truth;
If true, 't is no great lease of its own fire;
For no one, save in very early youth,
Would like (I think) to trust all to desire,
Which is but a precarious bond, in sooth,
And apt to be transferr'd to the first buyer
At a sad discount: while your over chilly
Women, on t' other hand, seem somewhat silly.

XVII

That is, we cannot pardon their bad taste,
For so it seems to lovers swift or slow,
Who fain would have a mutual flame confess'd,
And see a sentimental passion glow,
Even were St. Francis' paramour their guest,
In his monastic concubine of snow; —
In short, the maxim for the amorous tribe is
Horatian, 'Medio tu tutissimus ibis.'

XVIII

The 'tu' 's *too* much, — but let it stand, — the verse
Requires it, that 's to say, the English rhyme,
And not the pink of old hexameters;
But, after all, there 's neither tune nor time
In the last line, which cannot well be worse,
And was thrust in to close the octave's chime:
I own no prosody can ever rate it
As a rule, but *truth* may, if you translate it.

XIX

If fair Gulbeyaz overdid her part,
I know not — it succeeded, and success
Is much in most things, not less in the heart
Than other articles of female dress.
Self-love in man, too, beats all female art;
They lie, we lie, all lie, but love no less;
And no one virtue yet, except starvation,
Could stop that worst of vices — propagation.

XX

We leave this royal couple to repose:
A bed is not a throne, and they may sleep,
Whate'er their dreams be, if of joys or woes:
Yet disappointed joys are woes as deep
As any man's clay mixture undergoes.
Our least of sorrows are such as we weep;
'T is the vile daily drop on drop which wears
The soul out (like the stone) with petty cares.

XXI

A scolding wife, a sullen son, a bill
To pay, unpaid, protested, or discounted
At a per-centage; a child cross, dog ill,
A favourite horse fallen lame just as he 's mounted,
A bad old woman making a worse will,
Which leaves you minus of the cash you counted
As certain; — these are paltry things, and yet
I 've rarely seen the man they did not fret.

XXII

I 'm a philosopher; confound them all!
Bills, beasts, and men, and — no! *not* womankind!
With one good hearty curse I vent my gall,
And then my stoicism leaves nought behind
Which it can either pain or evil call,
And I can give my whole soul up to mind;
Though what *is* soul or mind, their birth or growth,
Is more than I know — the deuce take them both!

XXIII

So now all things are d—n'd one feels at ease,
As after reading Athanasius' curse,
Which doth your true believer so much please:
I doubt if any now could make it worse
O'er his worst enemy when at his knees,
'T is so sententious, positive, and terse,
And decorates the book of Common Prayer,
As doth a rainbow the just clearing air.

XXIV

Gulbeyaz and her lord were sleeping, or
At least one of them! — Oh, the heavy night,
When wicked wives, who love some bachelor,
Lie down in dudgeon to sigh for the light
Of the gray morning, and look vainly for
Its twinkle through the lattice dusky quite —
To toss, to tumble, doze, revive, and quake
Lest their too lawful bed-fellow should wake!

XXV

These are beneath the canopy of heaven,
Also beneath the canopy of beds
Four-posted and silk curtain'd, which are given
For rich men and their brides to lay their heads
Upon, in sheets white as what bards call 'driven
Snow.' Well! 't is all hap-hazard when one weds.
Gulbeyaz was an empress, but had been
Perhaps as wretched if a *peasant's quean.*

XXVI

Don Juan in his feminine disguise,
With all the damsels in their long array,
Had bow'd themselves before th' imperial eyes,
And at the usual signal ta'en their way
Back to their chambers, those long galleries
In the seraglio, where the ladies lay
Their delicate limbs; a thousand bosoms there
Beating for love, as the caged bird's for air.

XXVII

I love the sex, and sometimes would reverse
The tyrant's wish, 'that mankind only had
One neck, which he with one fell stroke might pierce:'
My wish is quite as wide, but not so bad,
And much more tender on the whole than fierce;

It being (not *now*, but only while a lad)
That womankind had but one rosy mouth,
To kiss them all at once from North to South.

XXVIII

Oh, enviable Briareus! with thy hands
And heads, if thou hadst all things multiplied
In such proportion! — But my Muse withstands
The giant thought of being a Titan's bride,
Or travelling in Patagonian lands;
So let us back to Lilliput, and guide
Our hero through the labyrinth of love
In which we left him several lines above.

XXIX

He went forth with the lovely Odalisques,
At the given signal join'd to their array;
And though he certainly ran many risks,
Yet he could not at times keep, by the way
(Although the consequences of such frisks
Are worse than the worst damages men pay
In moral England, where the thing 's a tax),
From ogling all their charms from breasts to backs.

XXX

Still he forgot not his disguise: — along
The galleries from room to room they walk'd,
A virgin-like and edifying throng,
By eunuchs flank'd; while at their head there stalk'd
A dame who kept up discipline among
The female ranks, so that none stirr'd or talk'd
Without her sanction on their she-parades:
Her title was 'the Mother of the Maids.'

XXXI

Whether she was a 'mother,' I know not,
Or whether they were 'maids' who call'd her mother;
But this is her seraglio title, got
I know not how, but good as any other;
So Cantemir can tell you, or De Tott:
Her office was to keep aloof or smother
All bad propensities in fifteen hundred
Young women, and correct them when they blunder'd.

XXXII

A goodly sinecure, no doubt! but made
More easy by the absence of all men —
Except his majesty, who, with her aid,
And guards, and bolts, and walls, and now and then
A slight example, just to cast a shade
Along the rest, contrived to keep this den
Of beauties cool as an Italian convent,
Where all the passions have, alas! but one vent.

XXXIII

And what is that? Devotion, doubtless — how
Could you ask such a question? — but we will
Continue. As I said, this goodly row
Of ladies of all countries at the will
Of one good man, with stately march and slow,
Like water-lilies floating down a rill —
Or rather lake, for *rills* do *not* run *slowly* —
Paced on most maiden-like and melancholy.

XXXIV

But when they reach'd their own apartments, there,
Like birds, or boys, or bedlamites broke loose,
Waves at spring-tide, or women anywhere
When freed from bonds (which are of no great use
After all), or like Irish at a fair,
Their guards being gone, and as it were a truce
Establish'd between them and bondage, they
Began to sing, dance, chatter, smile, an play.

XXXV

Their talk, of course, ran most on the new comer;
Her shape, her hair, her air, her everything:
Some thought her dress did not so much become her,
Or wonder'd at her ears without a ring;
Some said her years were getting nigh their summer,
Others contended they were but in spring;
Some thought her rather masculine in height,
While others wish'd that she had been so quite.

XXXVI

But no one doubted on the whole, that she
Was what her dress bespoke, a damsel fair,
And fresh, and 'beautiful exceedingly,'
Who with the brightest Georgians might compare:
They wonder'd how Gulbeyaz, too, could be
So silly as to buy slaves who might share
(If that his Highness wearied of his bride)
Her throne and power, and every thing beside.

XXXVII

But what was strangest in this virgin crew,
Although her beauty was enough to vex,
After the first investigating view,
They all found out as few, or fewer, specks
In the fair form of their companion new,
Than is the custom of the gentle sex,
When they survey, with Christian eyes or Heathen,
In a new face 'the ugliest creature breathing.'

XXXVIII

And yet they had their little jealousies,
Like all the rest; but upon this occasion,
Whether there are such things as sympathies
Without our knowledge or our approbation,
Although they could not see through his disguise,
All felt a soft kind of concatenation,
Like magnetism, or devilism, or what
You please — we will not quarrel about that:

XXXIX

But certain 't is they all felt for their new
Companion something newer still, as 't were
A sentimental friendship through and through,
Extremely pure, which made them all concur
In wishing her their sister, save a few
Who wish'd they had a brother just like her,
Whom, if they were at home in sweet Circassia,
They would prefer to Padisha or Pacha.

XL

Of those who had most genius for this sort
Of sentimental friendship, there were three,
Lolah, Katinka, and Dudù; in short
(To save description), fair as fair can be
Were they, according to the best report,
Though differing in stature and degree,
And clime and time, and country and complexion;
They all alike admired their new connection.

XLI

Lolah was dusk as India and as warm;
Katinka was a Georgian, white and red,
With great blue eyes, a lovely hand and arm,
And feet so small they scarce seem'd made to tread,
But rather skim the earth; while Dudù's form
Look'd more adapted to be put to bed,
Being somewhat large, and languishing, and lazy,
Yet of a beauty that would drive you crazy.

XLII

A kind of sleepy Venus seem'd Dudù,
Yet very fit to 'murder sleep' in those
Who gazed upon her cheek's transcendent hue,
Her Attic forehead, and her Phidian nose:
Few angles were there in her form, 't is true,
Thinner she might have been, and yet scarce lose;
Yet, after all, 't would puzzle to say where
It would not spoil some separate charm to *pare*.

XLIII

She was not violently lively, but
Stole on your spirit like a May-day breaking;
Her eyes were not too sparkling, yet, half-shut,
They put beholders in a tender taking;
She look'd (this simile 's quite new) just cut
From marble, like Pygmalion's statue waking,
The mortal and the marble still at strife,
And timidly expanding into life.

XLIV

Lolah demanded the new damsel's name —
'Juanna.' — Well, a pretty name enough.
Katinka ask'd her also whence she came —
'From Spain.' — 'But where *is* Spain?' — 'Don't ask such stuff,
Nor show your Georgian ignorance — for shame!'
Said Lolah, with an accent rather rough,
To poor Katinka: 'Spain 's an island near
Morocco, betwixt Egypt and Tangier.'

XLV

Dudù said nothing, but sat down beside
Juanna, playing with her veil or hair;
And looking at her steadfastly, she sigh'd,
As if she pitied her for being there,
A pretty stranger without friend or guide,
And all abash'd, too, at the general stare
Which welcomes hapless strangers in all places,
With kind remarks upon their mien and faces.

XLVI

But here the Mother of the Maids drew near,
With, 'Ladies, it is time to go to rest.
I 'm puzzled what to do with you, my dear,'
She added to Juanna, their new guest:
'Your coming has been unexpected here,
And every couch is occupied; you had best
Partake of mine; but by to-morrow early
We will have all things settled for you fairly.'

XLVII

Here Lolah interposed — 'Mamma, you know
You don't sleep soundly, and I cannot bear
That anybody should disturb you so;
I 'll take Juanna; we 're a slenderer pair
Than you would make the half of; — don't say no;
And I of your young charge will take due care.'
But here Katinka interfered, and said,
'She also had compassion and a bed.

XLVIII

'Besides, I hate to sleep alone,' quoth she.
The matron frown'd: 'Why so?' — 'For fear of ghosts,'
Replied Katinka; 'I am sure I see
A phantom upon each of the four posts;
And then I have the worst dreams that can be,
Of Guebres, Giaours, and Ginns, and Gouls in hosts.'
The dame replied, 'Between your dreams and you,
I fear Juanna's dreams would be but few.

XLIX

'You, Lolah, must continue still to lie
Alone, for reasons which don't matter; you
The same, Katinka, until by and by;
And I shall place Juanna with Dudù,
Who 's quiet, inoffensive, silent, shy,
And will not toss and chatter the night through.
What say you, child?' — Dudù said nothing, as
Her talents were of the more silent class;

L

But she rose up, and kiss'd the matron's brow
Between the eyes, and Lolah on both cheeks,
Katinka, too; and with a gentle bow
(Curt'sies are neither used by Turks nor Greeks)
She took Juanna by the hand to show
Their place of rest, and left to both their piques,
The others pouting at the matron's preference
Of Dudù, though they held their tongues from deference.

LI

It was a spacious chamber (Oda is
The Turkish title), and ranged round the wall
Were couches, toilets — and much more than this
I might describe, as I have seen it all,
But it suffices — little was amiss;
'T was on the whole a nobly furnish'd hall,
With all things ladies want, save one or two,
And even those were nearer than they knew.

LII

Dudú, as has been said, was a sweet creature,
Not very dashing, but extremely winning,

With the most regulated charms of feature,
Which painters cannot catch like faces sinning
Against proportion — the wild strokes of nature
Which they hit off at once in the beginning,
Full of expression, right or wrong, that strike,
And pleasing or unpleasing, still are like.

LIII

But she was a soft landscape of mild earth,
Where all was harmony, and calm, and quiet,
Luxuriant, budding; cheerful without mirth,
Which, if not happiness, is much more nigh it
Than are your mighty passions and so forth,
Which some call 'the sublime:' I wish they 'd try it:
I 've seen your stormy seas and stormy women,
And pity lovers rather more than seamen.

LIV

But she was pensive more than melancholy,
And serious more than pensive, and serene,
It may be, more than either — not unholy
Her thoughts, at least till now, appear to have been.
The strangest thing was, beauteous, she was wholly
Unconscious, albeit turn'd of quick seventeen,
That she was fair, or dark, or short, or tall;
She never thought about herself at all.

LV

And therefore was she kind and gentle as
The Age of Gold (when gold was yet unknown,
By which its nomenclature came to pass;
Thus most appropriately has been shown
'Lucus à *non* lucendo,' *not* what *was*,
But what *was not;* a sort of style that 's grown
Extremely common in this age, whose metal
The devil may decompose, but never settle:

LVI

I think it may be of 'Corinthian Brass,'
Which was a mixture of all metals, but
The brazen uppermost). Kind reader! pass
This long parenthesis: I could not shut
It sooner for the soul of me, and class
My faults even with your own! which meaneth, Put
A kind construction upon them and me:
But *that* you won't — then don't — I am not less free.

LVII

'T is time we should return to plain narration,
And thus my narrative proceeds: — Dudù,
With every kindness short of ostentation,
Show'd Juan, or Juanna, through and through
This labyrinth of females, and each station
Described — what 's strange — in words extremely few:
I have but one simile, and that 's a blunder,
For wordless woman, which is *silent* thunder.

LVIII

And next she gave her (I say *her*, because
The gender still was epicene, at least
In outward show, which is a saving clause)
An outline of the customs of the East,
With all their chaste integrity of laws,
By which the more a haram is increased,
The stricter doubtless grow the vestal duties
Of any supernumerary beauties.

LIX

And then she gave Juanna a chaste kiss:
Dudù was fond of kissing — which I 'm sure
That nobody can ever take amiss,
Because 't is pleasant, so that it be pure,
And between females means no more than this —
That they have nothing better near, or newer.
'Kiss' rhymes to 'bliss' in fact as well as verse —
I wish it never led to something worse.

LX

In perfect innocence she then unmade
Her toilet, which cost little, for she was
A child of Nature, carelessly array'd:
If fond of a chance ogle at her glass,
'T was like the fawn, which, in the lake display'd,
Beholds her own shy, shadowy image pass,
When first she starts, and then returns to peep,
Admiring this new native of the deep.

LXI

And one by one her articles of dress
Were laid aside; but not before she offer'd
Her aid to fair Juanna, whose excess
Of modesty declined the assistance proffer'd:
Which pass'd well off — as she could do no less;
Though by this politesse she rather suffer'd,
Pricking her fingers with those cursèd pins,
Which surely were invented for our sins, —

LXII

Making a woman like a porcupine,
Not to be rashly touch'd. But still more dread,
Oh ye! whose fate it is, as once 't was mine,
In early youth, to turn a lady's maid; —
I did my very boyish best to shine
In tricking her out for a masquerade;
The pins were placed sufficiently, but not
Stuck all exactly in the proper spot.

LXIII

But these are foolish things to all the wise,
And I love wisdom more than she loves me;
My tendency is to philosophise
On most things, from a tyrant to a tree;
But still the spouseless virgin *Knowledge* flies.
What are we? and whence came we? what shall be
Our *ultimate* existence? what 's our present?
Are questions answerless, and yet incessant.

LXIV

There was deep silence in the chamber: dim
And distant from each other burn'd the lights,
And slumber hover'd o'er each lovely limb
Of the fair occupants: if there be sprites,
They should have walk'd there in their sprightliest trim,
By way of change from their sepulchral sites,
And shown themselves as ghosts of better taste
Than haunting some old ruin or wild waste.

LXV

Many and beautiful lay those around,
Like flowers of different hue, and clime, and root,
In some exotic garden sometimes found,
With cost, and care, and warmth induced to shoot.
One with her auburn tresses lightly bound,
And fair brows gently drooping, as the fruit
Nods from the tree, was slumbering with soft breath,
And lips apart, which show'd the pearls beneath.

LXVI

One with her flush'd cheek laid on her white arm,
And raven ringlets gather'd in dark crowd
Above her brow, lay dreaming soft and warm;
And smiling through her dream, as through a cloud
The moon breaks, half unveil'd each further charm,
As, slightly stirring in her snowy shroud,
Her beauties seized the unconscious hour of night
All bashfully to struggle into light.

LXVII

This is no bull, although it sounds so; for
'T was night, but there were lamps, as hath been said.
A third's all pallid aspect offer'd more
The traits of sleeping sorrow, and betray'd
Through the heaved breast the dream of some far shore
Belovèd and deplored; while slowly stray'd
(As night-dew, on a cypress glittering, tinges
The black bough) tear-drops through her eyes' dark fringes.

LXVIII

A fourth as marble, statue-like and still,
Lay in a breathless, hush'd, and stony sleep;
White, cold, and pure, as looks a frozen rill,
Or the snow minaret on an Alpine steep,

Or Lot's wife done in salt, — or what you will; —
My similes are gather'd in a heap,
So pick and choose — perhaps you 'll be content
With a carved lady on a monument.

LXIX

And lo! a fifth appears; — and what is she?
A lady of a 'certain age,' which means
Certainly agèd — what her years might be
I know not, never counting past their teens;
But there she slept, not quite so fair to see,
As ere that awful period intervenes
Which lays both men and women on the shelf,
To meditate upon their sins and self.

LXX

But all this time how slept, or dream'd, Dudù?
With strict inquiry I could ne'er discover,
And scorn to add a syllable untrue;
But ere the middle watch was hardly over,
Just when the fading lamps waned dim and blue,
And phantoms hover'd, or might seem to hover,
To those who like their company, about
The apartment, on a sudden she scream'd out:

LXXI

And that so loudly, that upstarted all
The Oda, in a general commotion:
Matron and maids, and those whom you may call
Neither, came crowding like the waves of ocean,
One on the other, throughout the whole hall,
All trembling, wondering, without the least notion
More than I have myself of what could make
The calm Dudù so turbulently wake.

LXXII

But wide awake she was, and round her bed,
With floating draperies and with flying hair,
With eager eyes, and light but hurried tread,
And bosoms, arms, and ankles glancing bare,
And bright as any meteor ever bred
By the North Pole, — they sought her cause of care,
For she seem'd agitated, flush'd, and frighten'd,
Her eye dilated and her colour heighten'd.

LXXIII

But what was strange — and a strong proof how great
A blessing is sound sleep — Juanna lay
As fast as ever husband by his mate
In holy matrimony snores away.
Not all the clamour broke her happy state
Of slumber, ere they shook her, — so they say
At least, — and then she, too, unclosed her eyes,
And yawn'd a good deal with discreet surprise.

LXXIV

And now commenced a strict investigation,
Which, as all spoke at once and more than once,
Conjecturing, wondering, asking a narration,
Alike might puzzle either wit or dunce
To answer in a very clear oration.
Dudù had never pass'd for wanting sense,
But, being 'no orator as Brutus is,'
Could not at first expound what was amiss.

LXXV

At length she said, that in a slumber sound
She dream'd a dream, of walking in a wood —
A 'wood obscure,' like that where Dante found
Himself in at the age when all grow good;
Life's half-way house, where dames with virtue crown'd
Run much less risk of lovers turning rude;
And that this wood was full of pleasant fruits,
And trees of goodly growth and spreading roots;

LXXVI

And in the midst a golden apple grew, —
A most prodigious pippin, — but it hung

Rather too high and distant; that she threw
Her glances on it, and then, longing, flung
Stones and whatever she could pick up, to
Bring down the fruit, which still perversely clung
To its own bough, and dangled yet in sight,
But always at a most provoking height; —

LXXVII

That on a sudden, when she least had hope,
It fell down of its own accord before 610
Her feet; that her first movement was to stoop
And pick it up, and bite it to the core;
That just as her young lip began to ope
Upon the golden fruit the vision bore,
A bee flew out and stung her to the heart,
And so — she awoke with a great scream and start.

LXXVIII

All this she told with some confusion and
Dismay, the usual consequence of dreams
Of the unpleasant kind, with none at hand
To expound their vain and visionary gleams. 620
I 've known some odd ones which seem'd really plann'd
Prophetically, or that which one deems
A 'strange coincidence,' to use a phrase
By which such things are settled now-a-days.

LXXIX

The damsels, who had thoughts of some great harm,
Began, as is the consequence of fear,
To scold a little at the false alarm
That broke for nothing on their sleeping ear.
The matron, too, was wroth to leave her warm
Bed for the dream she had been obliged to hear, 630
And chafed at poor Dudù, who only sigh'd,
And said that she was sorry she had cried.

LXXX

'I 've heard of stories of a cock and bull;
But visions of an apple and a bee,
To take us from our natural rest, and pull
The whole Oda from their beds at half-past three,
Would make us think the moon is at its full.
You surely are unwell, child! we must see,
To-morrow, what his Highness's physician
Will say to this hysteric of a vision. 640

LXXXI

'And poor Juanna, too — the child's first night
Within these walls to be broke in upon
With such a clamour! I had thought it right
That the young stranger should not lie alone,
And, as the quietest of all, she might
With you, Dudù, a good night's rest have known;
But now I must transfer her to the charge
Of Lolah — though her couch is not so large.'

LXXXII

Lolah's eyes sparkled at the proposition;
But poor Dudù, with large drops in her own, 650
Resulting from the scolding or the vision,
Implored that present pardon might be shown
For this first fault, and that on no condition
(She added in a soft and piteous tone)
Juanna should be taken from her, and
Her future dreams should all be kept in hand.

LXXXIII

She promised never more to have a dream,
At least to dream so loudly as just now;
She wonder'd at herself how she could scream —
'T was foolish, nervous, as she must allow, 660
A fond hallucination, and a theme
For laughter — but she felt her spirits low,
And begg'd they would excuse her; she 'd get over
This weakness in a few hours, and recover.

LXXXIV

And here Juanna kindly interposed,
And said she felt herself extremely well
Where she then was, as her sound sleep disclosed
When all around rang like a tocsin bell:

She did not find herself the least disposed
To quit her gentle partner, and to dwell
Apart from one who had no sin to show, 671
Save that of dreaming once 'mal-à-propos.'

LXXXV

As thus Juanna spoke, Dudù turn'd round
And hid her face within Juanna's breast:
Her neck alone was seen, but that was found
The colour of a budding rose's crest.
I can't tell why she blush'd, nor can expound
The mystery of this rupture of their rest;
All that I know is, that the facts I state
Are true as truth has ever been of late. 680

LXXXVI

And so good night to them, — or, if you will,
Good morrow — for the cock had crown, and light
Began to clothe each Asiatic hill,
And the mosque crescent struggled into sight
Of the long caravan, which in the chill
Of dewy dawn wound slowly round each height
That stretches to the stony belt, which girds
Asia, where Kaff looks down upon the Kurds.

LXXXVII

With the first ray, or rather grey of morn,
Gulbeyaz rose from restlessness; and pale
As passion rises, with its bosom worn, 691
Array'd herself with mantle, gem, and veil.
The nightingale that sings with the deep thorn,
Which fable places in her breast of wail,
Is lighter far of heart and voice than those
Whose headlong passions form their proper woes.

LXXXVIII

And that 's the moral of this composition,
If people would but see its real drift; —
But *that* they will not do without suspicion,
Because all gentle readers have the gift
Of closing 'gainst the light their orbs of vision; 701
While gentle writers also love to lift
Their voices 'gainst each other, which is natural,
The numbers are too great for them to flatter all

LXXXIX

Rose the sultana from a bed of splendour,
Softer than the soft Sybarite's, who cried
Aloud because his feelings were too tender
To brook a ruffled rose-leaf by his side, —
So beautiful that art could little mend her,
Though pale with conflicts between love and pride; — 710
So agitated was she with her error,
She did not even look into the mirror.

XC

Also arose about the self-same time,
Perhaps a little later, her great lord,
Master of thirty kingdoms so sublime,
And of a wife by whom he was abhorr'd;
A thing of much less import in that clime —
At least to those of incomes which afford
The filling up their whole connubial cargo —
Than where two wives are under an embargo. 720

XCI

He did not think much on the matter, nor
Indeed on any other: as a man
He liked to have a handsome paramour
At hand, as one may like to have a fan,
And therefore of Circassians had good store,
As an amusement after the Divan;
Though an unusual fit of love, or duty,
Had made him lately bask in his bride's beauty.

XCII

And now he rose; and after due ablutions
Exacted by the customs of the East, 730
And prayers and other pious evolutions,
He drank six cups of coffee at the least,
And then withdrew to hear about the Russians,
Whose victories had recently increased
In Catherine's reign, whom glory still adores,
As greatest of all sovereigns and w——s.

XCIII

But oh, thou grand legitimate Alexander!
Her son's son, let not this last phrase offend
Thine ear, if it should reach — and now rhymes wander
Almost as far as Petersburgh and lend 740
A dreadful impulse to each loud meander
Of murmuring Liberty's wide waves, which blend

Their roar even with the Baltic's—so you be
Your father's son, 't is quite enough for me.

XCIV

To call men love-begotten or proclaim
Their mothers as the antipodes of Timon,
That hater of mankind, would be a shame,
A libel, or whate'er you please to rhyme on:
But people's ancestors are history's game;
And if one lady's slip could leave a crime on
All generations, I should like to know
What pedigree the best would have to show?

XCV

Had Catherine and the sultan understood
Their own true interests, which kings rarely know
Until 't is taught by lessons rather rude,
There was a way to end their strife, although
Perhaps precarious, had they but thought good,
Without the aid of prince or plenipo:
She to dismiss her guards and he his haram,
And for their other matters, meet and share 'em.

XCVI

But as it was, his Highness had to hold
His daily council upon ways and means
How to encounter with this martial scold,
This modern Amazon and queen of queans;
And the perplexity could not be told
Of all the pillars of the state, which leans
Sometimes a little heavy on the backs
Of those who cannot lay on a new tax.

XCVII

Meantime Gulbeyaz, when her king was gone,
Retired into her boudoir, a sweet place
For love or breakfast; private, pleasing, lone,
And rich with all contrivances which grace
Those gay recesses:—many a precious stone
Sparkled along its roof, and many a vase
Of porcelain held in the fetter'd flowers,
Those captive soothers of a captive's hours.

XCVIII

Mother of pearl, and porphyry, and marble,
Vied with each other on this costly spot;
And singing birds without were heard to warble;
And the stain'd glass which lighted this fair grot
Varied each ray;—but all descriptions garble
The true effect, and so we had better not
Be too minute; an outline is the best,—
A lively reader's fancy does the rest.

XCIX

And here she summon'd Baba, and required
Don Juan at his hands, and information
Of what had pass'd since all the slaves retired,
And whether he had occupied their station;
If matters had been managed as desired,
And his disguise with due consideration
Kept up; and above all, the where and how
He had pass'd the night, was what she wish'd to know.

C

Baba, with some embarrassment, replied
To this long catechism of questions, ask'd
More easily than answer'd,—that he had tried
His best to obey in what he had been task'd;
But there seem'd something that he wish'd to hide,
Which hesitation more betray'd than mask'd;
He scratch'd his ear, the infallible resource
To which embarrass'd people have recourse.

CI

Gulbeyaz was no model of true patience,
Nor much disposed to wait in word or deed;
She liked quick answers in all conversations;
And when she saw him stumbling like a steed
In his replies, she puzzled him for fresh ones;
And as his speech grew still more broken-kneed,
Her cheek began to flush, her eyes to sparkle,
And her proud brow's blue veins to swell and darkle.

CII

When Baba saw these symptoms, which he knew
To bode him no great good, he deprecated
Her anger, and beseech'd she 'd hear him through —
He could not help the thing which he related:
Then out it came at length, that to Dudù
Juan was given in charge, as hath been stated;
But not by Baba's fault, he said, and swore on
The holy camel's hump, besides the Koran.

CIII

The chief dame of the Oda, upon whom
The discipline of the whole haram bore,
As soon as they re-enter'd their own room,
For Baba's function stopt short at the door,
Had settled all; nor could he then presume
(The aforesaid Baba) just then to do more,
Without exciting such suspicion as
Might make the matter still worse than it was.

CIV

He hoped, indeed he thought, he could be sure
Juan had not betray'd himself; in fact
'T was certain that his conduct had been pure,
Because a foolish or imprudent act
Would not alone have made him insecure,
But ended in his being found out and *sack'd*,
And thrown into the sea. — Thus Baba spoke
Of all save Dudù's dream, which was no joke.

CV

This he discreetly kept in the background,
And talk'd away — and might have talk'd till now,
For any further answer that he found,
So deep an anguish wrung Gulbeyaz' brow:
Her cheek turn'd ashes, ears rung, brain whirl'd round,
As if she had received a sudden blow,
And the heart's dew of pain sprang fast and chilly
O'er her fair front, like Morning's on a lily.

CVI

Although she was not of the fainting sort,
Baba thought she would faint, but there he err'd —
It was but a convulsion, which though short
Can never be described; we all have heard,
And some of us have felt thus '*all amort*,'
When things beyond the common have occurr'd; —
Gulbeyaz proved in that brief agony
What she could ne'er express — then how should I?

CVII

She stood a moment as a Pythoness
Stands on her tripod, agonised, and full
Of inspiration gather'd from distress,
When all the heart-strings like wild horses pull
The heart asunder; — then, as more or less
Their speed abated or their strength grew dull,
She sunk down on her seat by slow degrees,
And bow'd her throbbing head o'er trembling knees.

CVIII

Her face declined and was unseen; her hair
Fell in long tresses like the weeping willow,
Sweeping the marble underneath her chair,
Or rather sofa (for it was all pillow,
A low soft ottoman), and black despair
Stirr'd up and down her bosom like a billow,
Which rushes to some shore whose shingles check
Its farther course, but must receive its wreck.

CIX

Her head hung down, and her long hair in stooping
Conceal'd her features better than a veil;
And one hand o'er the ottoman lay drooping,
White, waxen, and as alabaster pale:
Would that I were a painter! to be grouping
All that a poet drags into detail!
Oh that my words were colours! but their tints
May serve perhaps as outlines or slight hints.

CX

Baba, who knew by experience when to talk
And when to hold his tongue, now held it till
This passion might blow o'er, nor dared to balk
Gulbeyaz' taciturn or speaking will.
At length she rose up, and began to walk
Slowly along the room, but silent still,
And her brow clear'd, but not her troubled eye;
The wind was down, but still the sea ran high.

CXI

She stopp'd, and raised her head to speak — but paused,
And then moved on again with rapid pace;
Then slacken'd it, which is the march most caused
By deep emotion: — you may sometimes trace
A feeling in each footstep, as disclosed
By Sallust in his Catiline, who, chased
By all the demons of all passions, show'd
Their work even by the way in which he trode.

CXII

Gulbeyaz stopp'd and beckon'd Baba: — 'Slave!
Bring the two slaves!' she said in a low tone,
But one which Baba did not like to brave,
And yet he shudder'd, and seem'd rather prone
To prove reluctant, and begg'd leave to crave
(Though he well knew the meaning) to be shown
What slaves her highness wish'd to indicate,
For fear of any error, like the late.

CXIII

'The Georgian and her paramour,' replied
The imperial bride — and added, 'Let the boat
Be ready by the secret portal's side:
You know the rest.' The words stuck in her throat,
Despite her injured love and fiery pride;
And of this Baba willingly took note,
And begg'd by every hair of Mahomet's beard,
She would revoke the order he had heard.

CXIV

'To hear is to obey,' he said; 'but still,
Sultana, think upon the consequence:
It is not that I shall not all fulfil
Your orders, even in their severest sense;
But such precipitation may end ill,
Even at your own imperative expense:
I do not mean destruction and exposure,
In case of any premature disclosure;

CXV

'But your own feelings. Even should all the rest
Be hidden by the rolling waves, which hide
Already many a once love-beaten breast
Deep in the caverns of the deadly tide —
You love this boyish, new, seraglio guest,
And if this violent remedy be tried —
Excuse my freedom, when I here assure you,
That killing him is not the way to cure you.'

CXVI

'What dost thou know of love or feeling? — Wretch!
Begone!' she cried, with kindling eyes — 'and do
My bidding!' Baba vanish'd, for to stretch
His own remonstrance further he well knew
Might end in acting as his own 'Jack Ketch;'
And though he wish'd extremely to get through
This awkward business without harm to others,
He still preferr'd his own neck to another's.

CXVII

Away he went then upon his commission,
Growling and grumbling in good Turkish phrase
Against all women of whate'er condition,
Especially sultanas and their ways;
Their obstinacy, pride, and indecision,
Their never knowing their own mind two days,
The trouble that they gave, their immorality,
Which made him daily bless his own neutrality.

CXVIII

And then he call'd his brethren to his aid,
And sent one on a summons to the pair,
That they must instantly be well array'd,
And above all be comb'd even to a hair,
And brought before the empress, who had made
Inquiries after them with kindest care:
At which Dudù look'd strange, and Juan silly;
But go they must at once, and will I — nill I.

CXIX

And here I leave them at their preparation
For the imperial presence, wherein whether
Gulbeyaz show'd them both commiseration,
Or got rid of the parties altogether,
Like other angry ladies of her nation, —
Are things the turning of a hair or feather
May settle; but far be 't from me to anticipate
In what way feminine caprice may dissipate.

CXX

I leave them for the present with good wishes,
Though doubts of their well doing, to arrange
Another part of history; for the dishes
Of this our banquet we must sometimes change;
And trusting Juan may escape the fishes,
Although his situation now seems strange
And scarce secure, as such digressions *are* fair,
The Muse will take a little touch at warfare.

CANTO THE SEVENTH

I

O Love! O Glory! what are ye who fly
Around us ever, rarely to alight?
There 's not a meteor in the polar sky
Of such transcendent and more fleeting flight.
Chill, and chain'd to cold earth, we lift on high
Our eyes in search of either lovely light;
A thousand and a thousand colours they
Assume, then leave us on our freezing way.

II

And such as they are, such my present tale is,
A non-descript and ever-varying rhyme,
A versified Aurora Borealis,
Which flashes o'er a waste and icy clime.
When we know what all are, we must bewail us,
But ne'ertheless I hope it is no crime
To laugh at *all* things — for I wish to know
What, after *all*, are *all* things — but a *show*?

III

They accuse me — *Me* — the present writer of
The present poem — of — I know not what —
A tendency to under-rate and scoff
At human power and virtue, and all that;
And this they say in language rather rough.
Good God! I wonder what they would be at!
I say no more than hath been said in Danté's
Verse, and by Solomon and by Cervantes;

IV

By Swift, by Machiavel, by Rochefoucault,
By Fénelon, by Luther, and by Plato;
By Tillotson, and Wesley, and Rousseau,
Who knew this life was not worth a potato.
'T is not their fault, nor mine, if this be so —
For my part, I pretend not to be Cato,
Nor even Diogenes. — We live and die,
But which is best, you know no more than I.

V

Socrates said, our only knowledge was
'To know that nothing could be known;' a pleasant
Science enough, which levels to an ass
Each man of wisdom, future, past, or present.
Newton (that proverb of the mind), alas!
Declared, with all his grand discoveries recent,
That he himself felt only 'like a youth
Picking up shells by the great ocean — Truth.'

VI

Ecclesiastes said, 'that all is vanity' —
Most modern preachers say the same, or show it
By their examples of true Christianity:

In short, all know, or very soon may know it;
And in this scene of all-confess'd inanity,
By saint, by sage, by preacher, and by poet,
Must I restrain me, through the fear of strife,
From holding up the nothingness of life?

VII

Dogs, or men! — for I flatter you in saying
That ye are dogs — your betters far — ye may
Read, or read not, what I am now essaying
To show ye what ye are in every way.
As little as the moon stops for the baying
Of wolves, will the bright muse withdraw one ray
From out her skies — then howl your idle wrath!
While she still silvers o'er your gloomy path.

VIII

'Fierce loves and faithless wars' — I am not sure
If this be the right reading — 't is no matter;
The fact 's about the same, I am secure;
I sing them both, and am about to batter
A town which did a famous siege endure,
And was beleaguer'd both by land and water
By Souvaroff, or Anglicè Suwarrow,
Who loved blood as an alderman loves marrow.

IX

The fortress is call'd Ismail, and is placed
Upon the Danube's left branch and left bank,
With buildings in the Oriental taste,
But still a fortress of the foremost rank,
Or was at least, unless 't is since defaced,
Which with your conquerors is a common prank:
It stands some eighty versts from the high sea,
And measures round of toises thousands three.

X

Within the extent of this fortification
A borough is comprised along the height
Upon the left, which from its loftier station
Commands the city, and upon its site
A Greek had raised around this elevation
A quantity of palisades *upright*,
So placed as to *impede* the fire of those
Who held the place, and to *assist* the foe's.

XI

This circumstance may serve to give a notion
Of the high talents of this new Vauban:
But the town ditch below was deep as ocean,
The rampart higher than you 'd wish to hang:
But then there was a great want of precaution
(Prithee, excuse this engineering slang),
Nor work advanced, nor cover'd way was there,
To hint at least 'Here is no thoroughfare.'

XII

But a stone bastion, with a narrow gorge,
And walls as thick as most skulls born as yet;
Two batteries, cap-à-pie, as our St. George,
Case-mated one, and t' other 'à barbette,'
Of Danube's bank took formidable charge;
While two and twenty cannon duly set
Rose over the town's right side, in bristling tier,
Forty feet high, upon a cavalier.

XIII

But from the river the town 's open quite,
Because the Turks could never be persuaded
A Russian vessel e'er would heave in sight;
And such their creed was, till they were invaded,
When it grew rather late to set things right.
But as the Danube could not well be waded,
They look'd upon the Muscovite flotilla,
And only shouted, 'Allah!' and 'Bis Millah!'

XIV

The Russians now were ready to attack:
But oh, ye goddesses of war and glory!
How shall I spell the name of each Cossacque
Who were immortal, could one tell their story?
Alas! what to their memory can lack?
Achilles' self was not more grim and gory

Than thousands of this new and polish'd nation,
Whose names want nothing but — pronunciation.

XV

Still I 'll record a few, if but to increase
Our euphony: there was Strongenoff, and Strokonoff,
Meknop, Serge Lwow, Arsniew of modern Greece,
And Tschitsshakoff, and Roguenoff, and Chokenoff,
And others of twelve consonants apiece;
And more might be found out, if I could poke enough
Into gazettes; but Fame (capricious strumpet),
It seems, has got an ear as well as trumpet,

XVI

And cannot tune those discords of narration,
Which may be names at Moscow, into rhyme;
Yet there were several worth commemoration,
As e'er was virgin of a nuptial chime;
Soft words, too, fitted for the peroration
Of Londonderry drawling against time,
Ending in 'ischskin,' 'ousckin,' 'iffskchy,' 'ouski,'
Of whom we can insert but Rousamouski,

XVII

Scherematoff and Chrematoff, Koklophti,
Koclobski, Kourakin, and Mouskin Pouskin,
All proper men of weapons, as e'er scoff'd high
Against a foe, or ran a sabre through skin:
Little cared they for Mahomet or Mufti,
Unless to make their kettle-drums a new skin
Out of their hides, if parchment had grown dear,
And no more handy substitute been near.

XVIII

Then there were foreigners of much renown,
Of various nations, and all volunteers;
Not fighting for their country or its crown,
But wishing to be one day brigadiers;
Also to have the sacking of a town,—
A pleasant thing to young men at their years.
'Mongst them were several Englishmen of pith,
Sixteen call'd Thomson, and nineteen named Smith.

XIX

Jack Thomson and Bill Thomson; all the rest
Had been call'd '*Jemmy*,' after the great bard;
I don't know whether they had arms or crest,
But such a godfather 's as good a card.
Three of the Smiths were Peters; but the best
Amongst them all, hard blows to inflict or ward,
Was *he*, since so renown'd 'in country quarters
At Halifax;' but now he served the Tartars.

XX

The rest were Jacks and Gills and Wills and Bills;
But when I 've added that the elder Jack Smith
Was born in Cumberland among the hills,
And that his father was an honest blacksmith,
I 've said all *I* know of a name that fills
Three lines of the despatch in taking 'Schmacksmith,'
A village of Moldavia's waste, wherein
He fell, immortal in a bulletin.

XXI

I wonder (although Mars no doubt 's a god I
Praise) if a man's name in a *bulletin*
May make up for a *bullet in* his body?
I hope this little question is no sin,
Because, though I am but a simple noddy,
I think one Shakspeare puts the same thought in
The mouth of some one in his plays so doting,
Which many people pass for wits by quoting.

XXII

Then there were Frenchmen, gallant, young, and gay:
But I 'm too great a patriot to record

Their Gallic names upon a glorious day;
I 'd rather tell ten lies than say a word
Of truth; — such truths are treason; they betray
Their country; and as traitors are abhorr'd
Who name the French in English, save to show
How Peace should make John Bull the Frenchman's foe.

XXIII

The Russians, having built two batteries on
An isle near Ismail, had two ends in view;
The first was to bombard it, and knock down
The public buildings and the private too,
No matter what poor souls might be undone.
The city's shape suggested this, 't is true;
Form'd like an amphitheatre, each dwelling
Presented a fine mark to throw a shell in.

XXIV

The second object was to profit by
The moment of the general consternation,
To attack the Turk's flotilla, which lay nigh
Extremely tranquil, anchor'd at its station:
But a third motive was as probably
To frighten them into capitulation;
A phantasy which sometimes seizes warriors,
Unless they are game as bull-dogs and fox-terriers.

XXV

A habit rather blamable, which is
That of despising those we combat with,
Common in many cases, was in this
The cause of killing Tchitchitzkoff and Smith;
One of the valorous 'Smiths' whom we shall miss
Out of those nineteen who late rhymed to 'pith;'
But 't is a name so spread o'er 'Sir' and 'Madam,'
That one would think the first who bore it 'Adam.'

XXVI

The Russian batteries were incomplete,
Because they were constructed in a hurry;
Thus the same cause which makes a verse want feet,
And throws a cloud o'er Longman and John Murray,
When the sale of new books is not so fleet
As they who print them think is necessary,
May likewise put off for a time what story
Sometimes calls 'murder,' and at others 'glory.'

XXVII

Whether it was their engineer's stupidity,
Their haste, or waste, I neither know nor care,
Or some contractor's personal cupidity,
Saving his soul by cheating in the ware
Of homicide, but there was no solidity
In the new batteries erected there;
They either miss'd, or they were never miss'd,
And added greatly to the missing list

XXVIII

A sad miscalculation about distance
Made all their naval matters incorrect;
Three fireships lost their amiable existence
Before they reach'd a spot to take effect:
The match was lit too soon, and no assistance
Could remedy this lubberly defect;
They blew up in the middle of the river,
While, though 't was dawn, the Turks slept fast as ever.

XXIX

At seven they rose, however, and survey'd
The Russ flotilla getting under way;
'T was nine, when still advancing undismay'd,
Within a cable's length their vessels lay
Off Ismail, and commenced a cannonade,
Which was return'd with interest, I may say,
And by a fire of musketry and grape,
And shells and shot of every size and shape.

XXX

For six hours bore they without intermission
The Turkish fire, and aided by their own

Land batteries, work'd their guns with great precision:
At length they found mere cannonade alone
By no means would produce the town's submission,
And made a signal to retreat at one.
One bark blew up, a second near the works
Running aground, was taken by the Turks.

XXXI

The Moslem, too, had lost both ships and men;
But when they saw the enemy retire,
Their Delhis mann'd some boats, and sail'd again,
And gall'd the Russians with a heavy fire,
And tried to make a landing on the main;
But here the effect fell short of their desire:
Count Damas drove them back into the water
Pell-mell, and with a whole gazette of slaughter.

XXXII

'If' (says the historian here) 'I could report
All that the Russians did upon this day,
I think that several volumes would fall short,
And I should still have many things to say;'
And so he says no more — but pays his court
To some distinguish'd strangers in that fray;
The Prince de Ligne, and Langeron, and Damas,
Names great as any that the roll of Fame has.

XXXIII

This being the case, may show us what Fame *is:*
For out of these three '*preux Chevaliers*,' how
Many of common readers give a guess
That such existed? (and they may live now
For aught we know.) Renown 's all hit or miss;
There 's fortune even in fame, we must allow.
'T is true the Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne
Have half withdrawn from *him* oblivion's screen.

XXXIV

But here are men who fought in gallant actions
As gallantly as ever heroes fought,
But buried in the heap of such transactions
Their names are rarely found, nor often sought.
Thus even good fame may suffer sad contractions,
And is extinguish'd sooner than she ought:
Of all our modern battles, I will bet
You can't repeat nine names from each Gazette.

XXXV

In short, this last attack, though rich in glory,
Show'd that *somewhere, somehow*, there was a fault,
And Admiral Ribas (known in Russian story)
Most strongly recommended an assault;
In which he was opposed by young and hoary,
Which made a long debate; but I must halt,
For if I wrote down every warrior's speech,
I doubt few readers e'er would mount the breach.

XXXVI

There was a man, if that he was a man,
Not that his manhood could be call'd in question,
For had he not been Hercules, his span
Had been as short in youth as indigestion
Made his last illness, when, all worn and wan,
He died beneath a tree, as much unblest on
The soil of the green province he had wasted,
As e'er was locust on the land it blasted.

XXXVII

This was Potemkin — a great thing in days
When homicide and harlotry made great;
If stars and titles could entail long praise,
His glory might half equal his estate.

This fellow, being six foot high, could raise
A kind of phantasy proportionate
In the then sovereign of the Russian people,
Who measured men as you would do a steeple.

XXXVIII

While things were in abeyance, Ribas sent
A courier to the prince, and he succeeded
In ordering matters after his own bent;
I cannot tell the way in which he pleaded,
But shortly he had cause to be content.
In the mean time, the batteries proceeded,
And fourscore cannon on the Danube's border
Were briskly fired and answer'd in due order.

XXXIX

But on the thirteenth, when already part
Of the troops were embark'd, the siege to raise,
A courier on the spur inspired new heart
Into all panters for newspaper praise,
As well as dilettanti in war's art,
By his despatches couch'd in pithy phrase;
Announcing the appointment of that lover of
Battles to the command, Field-Marshal Souvaroff.

XL

The letter of the prince to the same marshal
Was worthy of a Spartan, had the cause
Been one to which a good heart could be partial —
Defence of freedom, country, or of laws;
But as it was mere lust of power to o'er-arch all
With its proud brow, it merits slight applause,
Save for its style, which said, all in a trice,
'You will take Ismail at whatever price.'

XLI

'Let there be light! said God, and there was light!'
'Let there be blood!' says man, and there's a sea!
The fiat of this spoil'd child of the Night
(For Day ne'er saw his merits) could decree
More evil in an hour, than thirty bright
Summers could renovate, though they should be
Lovely as those which ripen'd Eden's fruit;
For war cuts up not only branch, but root.

XLII

Our friends the Turks, who with loud 'Allahs' now
Began to signalise the Russ retreat,
Were damnably mistaken; few are slow
In thinking that their enemy is beat
(Or *beaten*, if *you* insist on grammar, though
I never think about it in a heat),
But here I say the Turks were much mistaken,
Who hating hogs, yet wish'd to save their bacon.

XLIII

For, on the sixteenth, at full gallop, drew
In sight two horsemen, who were deem'd Cossacques
For some time, till they came in nearer view.
They had but little baggage at their backs,
For there were but *three* shirts between the two;
But on they rode upon two Ukraine hacks,
Till, in approaching, were at length descried
In this plain pair, Suwarrow and his guide.

XLIV

'Great joy to London now!' says some great fool,
When London had a grand illumination,
Which to that bottle-conjurer, John Bull,
Is of all dreams the first hallucination;
So that the streets of colour'd lamps are full,
That Sage (*said* John) surrenders at discretion
His purse, his soul, his sense, and even his nonsense,
To gratify, like a huge moth, this *one* sense.

XLV

'T is strange that he should farther 'damn his eyes,'
For they are damn'd; that once all-famous oath
Is to the devil now no farther prize,
Since John has lately lost the use of both.
Debt he calls wealth, and taxes Paradise;
And Famine, with her gaunt and bony growth,

Which stare him in the face, he won't examine,
Or swears that Ceres hath begotten Famine.

XLVI

But to the tale:—great joy unto the camp!
To Russian, Tartar, English, French, Cossacque,
O'er whom Suwarrow shone like a gas lamp,
Presaging a most luminous attack;
Or like a wisp along the marsh so damp,
Which leads beholders on a boggy walk,
He flitted to and fro a dancing light,
Which all who saw it follow'd, wrong or right.

XLVII

But certes matters took a different face;
There was enthusiasm and much applause,
The fleet and camp saluted with great grace,
And all presaged good fortune to their cause.
Within a cannon-shot length of the place
They drew, constructed ladders, repair'd flaws
In former works, made new, prepared fascines,
And all kinds of benevolent machines.

XLVIII

'T is thus the spirit of a single mind
Makes that of multitudes take one direction,
As roll the waters to the breathing wind,
Or roams the herd beneath the bull's protection;
Or as a little dog will lead the blind,
Or a bell-wether form the flock's connection
By tinkling sounds, when they go forth to victual;
Such is the sway of your great men o'er little.

XLIX

The whole camp rung with joy; you would have thought
That they were going to a marriage feast
(This metaphor, I think, holds good as aught,
Since there is discord after both at least):
There was not now a luggage boy but sought
Danger and spoil with ardour much increased;
And why? because a little—odd—old man,
Stript to his shirt, was come to lead the van.

L

But so it was; and every preparation
Was made with all alacrity: the first
Detachment of three columns took its station,
And waited but the signal's voice to burst
Upon the foe: the second's ordination
Was also in three columns, with a thirst
For glory gaping o'er a sea of slaughter:
The third, in columns two, attack'd by water.

LI

New batteries were erected, and was held
A general council, in which unanimity,
That stranger to most councils, here prevail'd,
As sometimes happens in a great extremity;
And every difficulty being dispell'd,
Glory began to dawn with due sublimity,
While Souvaroff, determined to obtain it,
Was teaching his recruits to use the bayonet.

LII

It is an actual fact, that he, commander
In chief, in proper person deign'd to drill
The awkward squad, and could afford to squander
His time, a corporal's duty to fulfil:
Just as you 'd break a sucking salamander
To swallow flame, and never take it ill:
He show'd them how to mount a ladder (which
Was not like Jacob's) or to cross a ditch.

LIII

Also he dress'd up, for the nonce, fascines
Like men with turbans, scimitars, and dirks,
And made them charge with bayonet these machines,
By way of lesson against actual Turks:
And when well practised in these mimic scenes,
He judged them proper to assail the works;

At which your wise men sneer'd in phrases witty:
He made no answer; but he took the city.

LIV

Most things were in this posture on the eve
Of the assault, and all the camp was in
A stern repose; which you would scarce conceive;
Yet men resolved to dash through thick and thin
Are very silent when they once believe
That all is settled: — there was little din,
For some were thinking of their home and friends,
And others of themselves and latter ends.

LV

Suwarrow chiefly was on the alert,
Surveying, drilling, ordering, jesting, pondering;
For the man was, we safely may assert,
A thing to wonder at beyond most wondering;
Hero, buffoon, half-demon, and half-dirt,
Praying, instructing, desolating, plundering;
Now Mars, now Momus; and when bent to storm
A fortress, Harlequin in uniform.

LVI

The day before the assault, while upon drill —
For this great conqueror play'd the corporal —
Some Cossacques, hovering like hawks round a hill,
Had met a party towards the twilight's fall,
One of whom spoke their tongue — or well or ill,
'Twas much that he was understood at all;
But whether from his voice, or speech, or manner,
They found that he had fought beneath their banner.

LVII

Whereon immediately at his request
They brought him and his comrades to head-quarters;
Their dress was Moslem, but you might have guess'd
That these were merely masquerading Tartars,
And that beneath each Turkish-fashion'd vest
Lurk'd Christianity; which sometimes barters
Her inward grace for outward show, and makes
It difficult to shun some strange mistakes.

LVIII

Suwarrow, who was standing in his shirt
Before a company of Calmucks, drilling,
Exclaiming, fooling, swearing at the inert,
And lecturing on the noble art of killing, —
For deeming human clay but common dirt,
This great philosopher was thus instilling
His maxims, which to martial comprehension
Proved death in battle equal to a pension; —

LIX

Suwarrow, when he saw this company
Of Cossacques and their prey, turn'd round and cast
Upon them his slow brow and piercing eye: —
‘Whence come ye?’ — ‘From Constantinople last,
Captives just now escaped,’ was the reply.
‘What are ye?’ — ‘What you see us.’ Briefly pass'd
This dialogue; for he who answer'd knew
To whom he spoke, and made his words but few.

LX

‘Your names?’ — ‘Mine's Johnson, and my comrade's Juan;
The other two are women, and the third
Is neither man nor woman.’ The chief threw on
The party a slight glance, then said, ‘I have heard
Your name before, the second is a new one:
To bring the other three here was absurd:
But let that pass: — I think I have heard your name
In the Nikolaiew regiment?’ — ‘The same.’

LXI

‘You served at Widdin?’ — ‘Yes.’ — ‘You led the attack?’
‘I did.’ — ‘What next?’ — ‘I really hardly know.’

You were the first i' the breach ?' — 'I was not slack
At least to follow those who might be so.'
'What follow'd ?' — 'A shot laid me on my back,
And I became a prisoner to the foe.'
'You shall have vengeance, for the town surrounded
Is twice as strong as that where you were wounded.

LXII

'Where will you serve ?' — 'Where'er you please.' — 'I know
You like to be the hope of the forlorn,
And doubtless would be foremost on the foe
After the hardships you 've already borne.
And this young fellow — say what can he do ?
He with the beardless chin and garments torn ?'
'Why, general, if he hath no greater fault
In war than love, he had better lead the assault.'

LXIII

'He shall if that he dare.' Here Juan bow'd
Low as the compliment deserved. Suwarrow
Continued: 'Your old regiment 's allow'd,
By special providence, to lead to-morrow,
Or it may be to-night, the assault: I have vow'd
To several saints, that shortly plough or harrow
Shall pass o'er what was Ismail, and its tusk
Be unimpeded by the proudest mosque.

LXIV

'So now, my lads, for glory !' — Here he turn'd
And drill'd away in the most classic Russian,
Until each high, heroic bosom burn'd
For cash and conquest, as if from a cushion
A preacher had held forth (who nobly spurn'd
All earthly goods save tithes) and bade them push on
To slay the Pagans who resisted, battering
The armies of the Christian Empress Catherine.

LXV

Johnson, who knew by this long colloquy
Himself a favourite, ventured to address
Suwarrow, though engaged with accents high
In his resumed amusement. 'I confess
My debt in being thus allow'd to die
Among the foremost; but if you 'd express
Explicitly our several posts, my friend
And self would know what duty to attend.'

LXVI

'Right ! I was busy, and forgot. Why, you
Will join your former regiment, which should be
Now under arms. Ho ! Katskoff, take him to
(Here he call'd up a Polish orderly)
His post, I mean the regiment Nikolaiew:
The stranger stripling may remain with me;
He 's a fine boy. The women may be sent
To the other baggage, or to the sick tent.'

LXVII

But here a sort of scene began to ensue:
The ladies, — who by no means had been bred
To be disposed of in a way so new,
Although their haram education led
Doubtless to that of doctrines the most true,
Passive obedience, — now raised up the head,
With flashing eyes and starting tears, and flung
Their arms, as hens their wings about their young,

LXVIII

O'er the promoted couple of brave men
Who were thus honour'd by the greatest chief
That ever peopled hell with heroes slain,
Or plunged a province or a realm in grief.
Oh, foolish mortals ! Always taught in vain !
Oh, glorious laurel ! since for one sole leaf
Of thine imaginary deathless tree,
Of blood and tears must flow the unebbing sea.

LXIX

Suwarrow, who had small regard for tears,
And not much sympathy for blood, survey'd
The women with their hair about their ears
And natural agonies, with a slight shade
Of feeling: for however habit sears
Men's hearts against whole millions, when their trade
Is butchery, sometimes a single sorrow
Will touch even heroes — and such was Suwarrow.

LXX

He said, — and in the kindest Calmuck tone, —
'Why, Johnson, what the devil do you mean
By bringing women here? They shall be shown
All the attention possible, and seen
In safety to the waggons, where alone
In fact they can be safe. You should have been
Aware this kind of baggage never thrives:
Save wed a year, I hate recruits with wives.'

LXXI

'May it please your excellency,' thus replied
Our British friend, 'these are the wives of others,
And not our own. I am too qualified
By service with my military brothers
To break the rules by bringing one's own bride
Into a camp: I know that nought so bothers
The hearts of the heroic on a charge,
As leaving a small family at large.

LXXII

'But these are but two Turkish ladies, who
With their attendant aided our escape,
And afterwards accompanied us through
A thousand perils in this dubious shape.
To me this kind of life is not so new;
To them, poor things, it is an awkward scrape.
I therefore, if you wish me to fight freely,
Request that they may both be used genteelly.'

LXXIII

Meantime these two poor girls, with swimming eyes,
Look'd on as if in doubt if they could trust
Their own protectors; nor was their surprise
Less than their grief (and truly not less just)
To see an old man, rather wild than wise
In aspect, plainly clad, besmear'd with dust,
Stript to his waistcoat, and *that not* too clean,
More fear'd than all the sultans ever seen.

LXXIV

For every thing seem'd resting on his nod,
As they could read in all eyes. Now to them,
Who were accustom'd, as a sort of god,
To see the sultan, rich in many a gem,
Like an imperial peacock stalk abroad
(That royal bird, whose tail 's a diadem),
With all the pomp of power, it was a doubt
How power could condescend to do without.

LXXV

John Johnson, seeing their extreme dismay,
Though little versed in feelings oriental,
Suggested some slight comfort in his way:
Don Juan, who was much more sentimental,
Swore they should see him by the dawn of day,
Or that the Russian army should repent all:
And, strange to say, they found some consolation
In this — for females like exaggeration.

LXXVI

And then with tears, and sighs, and some slight kisses,
They parted for the present — these to await,
According to the artillery's hits or misses,
What sages call Chance, Providence, or Fate
(Uncertainty is one of many blisses,
A mortgage on Humanity's estate) —
While their beloved friends began to arm,
To burn a town which never did them harm.

LXXVII

Suwarrow, — who but saw things in the gross,
Being much too gross to see them in detail,

Who calculated life as so much dross,
And as the wind a widow'd nation's wail,
And cared as little for his army's loss
(So that their efforts should at length prevail)
As wife and friends did for the boils of Job, —
What was 't to him to hear two women sob?

LXXVIII

Nothing. — The work of glory still went on
In preparations for a cannonade
As terrible as that of Ilion,
If Homer had found mortars ready made;
But now, instead of slaying Priam's son,
We only can but talk of escalade,
Bombs, drums, guns, bastions, batteries, bayonets, bullets, —
Hard words, which stick in the soft Muses' gullets.

LXXIX

Oh, thou eternal Homer! who couldst charm
All ears, though long; all ages, though so short,
By merely wielding with poetic arm
Arms to which men will never more resort,
Unless gunpowder should be found to harm
Much less than is the hope of every court,
Which now is leagued young Freedom to annoy;
But they will not find Liberty a Troy: —

LXXX

Oh, thou eternal Homer! I have now
To paint a siege, wherein more men were slain,
With deadlier engines and a speedier blow,
Than in thy Greek gazette of that campaign;
And yet, like all men else, I must allow,
To vie with thee would be about as vain
As for a brook to cope with ocean's flood;
But still we moderns equal you in blood;

LXXXI

If not in poetry, at least in fact;
And fact is truth, the grand desideratum!
Of which, howe'er the Muse describes each act,
There should be ne'ertheless a slight substratum.
But now the town is going to be attack'd;
Great deeds are doing — how shall I relate 'em?
Souls of immortal generals! Phœbus watches
To colour up his rays from your despatches.

LXXXII

Oh, ye great bulletins of Bonaparte!
Oh, ye less grand long lists of kill'd and wounded!
Shade of Leonidas, who fought so hearty,
When my poor Greece was once, as now, surrounded!
Oh, Cæsar's Commentaries! now impart, ye
Shadows of glory! (lest I be confounded)
A portion of your fading twilight hues,
So beautiful, so fleeting, to the Muse.

LXXXIII

When I call 'fading' martial immortality,
I mean, that every age and every year,
And almost every day, in sad reality,
Some sucking hero is compell'd to rear,
Who, when we come to sum up the totality
Of deeds to human happiness most dear,
Turns out to be a butcher in great business,
Afflicting young folks with a sort of dizziness.

LXXXIV

Medals, rank, ribands, lace, embroidery, scarlet,
Are things immortal to immortal man,
As purple to the Babylonian harlot:
An uniform to boys is like a fan
To women; there is scarce a crimson varlet
But deems himself the first in Glory's van.
But Glory's glory; and if you would find
What that is — ask the pig who sees the wind!

LXXXV

At least *he feels it*, and some say he *sees*,
Because he runs before it like a pig;
Or, if that simple sentence should displease,
Say, that he scuds before it like a brig,
A schooner, or — but it is time to ease
This Canto, ere my Muse perceives fatigue.
The next shall ring a peal to shake all people,
Like a bob-major from a village steeple.

LXXXVI

Hark! through the silence of the cold, dull night,
The hum of armies gathering rank on rank!
Lo! dusky masses steal in dubious sight
Along the leaguer'd wall and bristling bank
Of the arm'd river, while with straggling light
The stars peep through the vapours dim and dank,
Which curl in curious wreaths: — how soon the smoke
Of Hell shall pall them in a deeper cloak!

LXXXVII

Here pause we for the present — as even then
That awful pause, dividing life from death,
Struck for an instant on the hearts of men,
Thousands of whom were drawing their last breath!
A moment — and all will be life again!
The march! the charge! the shouts of either faith!
Hurra! and Allah! and — one moment more,
The death-cry drowning in the battle's roar.

CANTO THE EIGHTH

I

Oh blood and thunder! and oh blood and wounds!
These are but vulgar oaths, as you may deem,
Too gentle reader! and most shocking sounds:
And so they are; yet thus is Glory's dream
Unriddled, and as my true Muse expounds
At present such things, since they are her theme,
So be they her inspirers! Call them Mars,
Bellona, what you will — they mean but wars.

II

All was prepared — the fire, the sword, the men
To wield them in their terrible array.
The army, like a lion from his den,
March'd forth with nerve and sinews bent to slay, —
A human Hydra, issuing from its fen
To breathe destruction on its winding way,
Whose heads were heroes, which cut off in vain
Immediately in others grew again.

III

History can only take things in the gross;
But could we know them in detail, perchance
In balancing the profit and the loss,
War's merit it by no means might enhance,
To waste so much gold for a little dross,
As hath been done, mere conquest to advance.
The drying up a single tear has more
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of gore.

IV

And why? — because it brings self-approbation;
Whereas the other, after all its glare,
Shouts, bridges, arches, pensions from a nation,
Which (it may be) has not much left to spare,
A higher title, or a loftier station,
Though they may make Corruption gape or stare,
Yet, in the end, except in Freedom's battles,
Are nothing but a child of Murder's rattles.

V

And such they are — and such they will be found:
Not so Leonidas and Washington,
Whose every battle-field is holy ground,
Which breathes of nations saved, not worlds undone.
How sweetly on the ear such echoes sound!
While the mere victor's may appal or stun
The servile and the vain, such names will be
A watchword till the future shall be free.

VI

The night was dark, and the thick mist allow'd
Nought to be seen save the artillery's flame,

Which arch'd the horizon like a fiery cloud,
And in the Danube's waters shone the same —
A mirror'd hell! the volleying roar, and loud
Long booming of each peal on peal, o'ercame
The ear far more than thunder; for Heaven's flashes
Spare, or smite rarely — man's make millions ashes!

VII

The column order'd on the assault scarce pass'd
Beyond the Russian batteries a few toises,
When up the bristling Moslem rose at last,
Answering the Christian thunders with like voices:
Then one vast fire, air, earth, and stream embraced,
Which rock'd as 't were beneath the mighty noises;
While the whole rampart blazed like Etna, when
The restless Titan hiccups in his den.

VIII

And one enormous shout of 'Allah!' rose
In the same moment, loud as even the roar
Of war's most mortal engines, to their foes
Hurling defiance: city, stream, and shore
Resounded 'Allah!' and the clouds which close
With thick'ning canopy the conflict o'er,
Vibrate to the Eternal name. Hark! through
All sounds it pierceth 'Allah! Allah! Hu!'

IX

The columns were in movement one and all,
But of the portion which attack'd by water,
Thicker than leaves the lives began to fall,
Though led by Arseniew, that great son of slaughter,
As brave as ever faced both bomb and ball.
'Carnage' (so Wordsworth tells you) 'is God's daughter:'
If *he* speak truth, she is Christ's sister, and
Just now behaved as in the Holy Land.

X

The Prince de Ligne was wounded in the knee;
Count Chapeau-Bras, too, had a ball between
His cap and head, which proves the head to be
Aristocratic as was ever seen,
Because it then received no injury
More than the cap; in fact, the ball could mean
No harm unto a right legitimate head:
'Ashes to ashes' — why not lead to lead?

XI

Also the General Markow, Brigadier,
Insisting on removal of *the prince*
Amidst some groaning thousands dying near, —
All common fellows, who might writhe and wince,
And shriek for water into a deaf ear, —
The General Markow, who could thus evince
His sympathy for rank, by the same token,
To teach him greater, had his own leg broken.

XII

Three hundred cannon threw up their emetic,
And thirty thousand muskets flung their pills
Like hail, to make a bloody diuretic.
Mortality! thou hast thy monthly bills;
Thy plagues, thy famines, thy physicians, yet tick,
Like the death-watch, within our ears the ills
Past, present, and to come; — but all may yield
To the true portrait of one battle-field.

XIII

There the still varying pangs, which multiply
Until their very number makes men hard
By the infinities of agony,
Which meet the gaze whate'er it may regard —
The groan, the roll in dust, the all-white eye
Turn'd back within its socket, — these reward

Your rank and file by thousands, while the rest
May win perhaps a riband at the breast!

XIV

Yet I love glory; — glory 's a great thing: —
Think what it is to be in your old age
Maintain'd at the expense of your good king:
A moderate pension shakes full many a sage,
And heroes are but made for bards to sing,
Which is still better; thus in verse to wage 110
Your wars eternally, besides enjoying
Half-pay for life, make mankind worth destroying.

XV

The troops, already disembark'd, push'd on
To take a battery on the right; the others,
Who landed lower down, their landing done,
Had set to work as briskly as their brothers:
Being grenadiers, they mounted one by one,
Cheerful as children climb the breasts of mothers,
O'er the entrenchment and the palisade,
Quite orderly, as if upon parade. 120

XVI

And this was admirable; for so hot
The fire was, that were red Vesuvius loaded,
Besides its lava, with all sorts of shot
And shells or hells, it could not more have goaded.
Of officers a third fell on the spot,
A thing which victory by no means boded
To gentlemen engaged in the assault:
Hounds, when the huntsman tumbles, are at fault.

XVII

But here I leave the general concern,
To track our hero on his path of fame:
He must his laurels separately earn; 131
For fifty thousand heroes, name by name,
Though all deserving equally to turn
A couplet, or an elegy to claim,
Would form a lengthy lexicon of glory,
And what is worse still, a much longer story:

XVIII

And therefore we must give the greater number
To the Gazette — which doubtless fairly dealt
By the deceased, who lie in famous slumber
In ditches, fields, or wheresoe'er they felt
Their clay for the last time their souls encumber; — 141
Thrice happy he whose name has been well spelt
In the despatch: I knew a man whose loss
Was printed *Grove*, although his name was Grose.

XIX

Juan and Johnson join'd a certain corps,
And fought away with might and main, not knowing
The way which they had never trod before,
And still less guessing where they might be going;
But on they march'd, dead bodies trampling o'er,
Firing, and thrusting, slashing, sweating, glowing, 150
But fighting thoughtlessly enough to win,
To their *two* selves, *one* whole bright bulletin.

XX

Thus on they wallow'd in the bloody mire
Of dead and dying thousands, — sometimes gaining
A yard or two of ground, which brought them nigher
To some odd angle for which all were straining;
At other times, repulsed by the close fire,
Which really pour'd as if all hell were raining
Instead of heaven, they stumbled backwards o'er
A wounded comrade, sprawling in his gore.

XXI

Though 't was Don Juan's first of fields, and though 161
The nightly muster and the silent march
In the chill dark, when courage does not glow
So much as under a triumphal arch,

Perhaps might make him shiver, yawn, or throw
A glance on the dull clouds (as thick as starch,
Which stiffen'd heaven) as if he wish'd for day; —
Yet for all this he did not run away.

XXII

Indeed he could not. But what if he had?
There *have been* and *are* heroes who begun
With something not much better, or as bad:
Frederic the Great from Molwitz deign'd to run,
For the first and last time; for, like a pad,
Or hawk, or bride, most mortals after one
Warm bout are broken into their new tricks,
And fight like fiends for pay or politics.

XXIII

He was what Erin calls, in her sublime
Old Erse or Irish, or it may be *Punic*
(The antiquarians who can settle time,
Which settles all things, Roman, Greek, or Runic,
Swear that Pat's language sprung from the same clime
With Hannibal, and wears the Tyrian tunic
Of Dido's alphabet; and this is rational
As any other notion, and not national); —

XXIV

But Juan was quite 'a broth of a boy,'
A thing of impulse and a child of song;
Now swimming in the sentiment of joy,
Or the *sensation* (if that phrase seem wrong),
And afterward, if he must needs destroy,
In such good company as always throng
To battles, sieges, and that kind of pleasure,
No less delighted to employ his leisure;

XXV

But always without malice: if he warr'd
Or loved, it was with what we call 'the best
Intentions,' which form all mankind's *trump card*,
To be produced when brought up to the test.
The statesman, hero, harlot, lawyer — ward
Off each attack, when people are in quest
Of their designs, by saying they *meant well;*
'T is pity 'that such meaning should pave hell.'

XXVI

I almost lately have begun to doubt
Whether hell's pavement — if it be so *paved* —
Must not have latterly been quite worn out,
Not by the numbers good intent hath saved,
But by the mass who go below without
Those ancient good intentions, which once shaved
And smooth'd the brimstone of that street of hell
Which bears the greatest likeness to Pall Mall.

XXVII

Juan, by some strange chance, which oft divides
Warrior from warrior in their grim career,
Like chastest wives from constant husbands' sides
Just at the close of the first bridal year,
By one of those odd turns of Fortune's tides,
Was on a sudden rather puzzled here,
When, after a good deal of heavy firing,
He found himself alone, and friends retiring.

XXVIII

I don't know how the thing occurr'd — it might
Be that the greater part were kill'd or wounded,
And that the rest had faced unto the right
About; a circumstance which has confounded
Cæsar himself, who, in the very sight
Of his whole army, which so much abounded
In courage, was obliged to snatch a shield,
And rally back his Romans to the field.

XXIX

Juan, who had no shield to snatch, and was
No Cæsar, but a fine young lad, who fought
He knew not why, arriving at this pass,
Stopp'd for a minute, as perhaps he ought

For a much longer time; then, like an ass
(Start not, kind reader; since great Homer thought
This simile enough for Ajax, Juan
Perhaps may find it better than a new one) —

XXX

Then, like an ass, he went upon his way,
And, what was stranger, never look'd behind;
But seeing, flashing forward, like the day
Over the hills, a fire enough to blind
Those who dislike to look upon a fray,
He stumbled on, to try if he could find
A path, to add his own slight arm and forces
To corps, the greater part of which were corses.

XXXI

Perceiving then no more the commandant
Of his own corps, nor even the corps, which had
Quite disappear'd — the gods know how! (I can't
Account for every thing which may look bad
In history; but we at least may grant
It was not marvellous that a mere lad,
In search of glory, should look on before,
Nor care a pinch of snuff about his corps): —

XXXII

Perceiving nor commander nor commanded,
And left at large, like a young heir, to make
His way to — where he knew not — single handed;
As travellers follow over bog and brake
An 'ignis fatuus;' or as sailors stranded
Unto the nearest hut themselves betake;
So Juan, following honour and his nose,
Rush'd where the thickest fire announced most foes.

XXXIII

He knew not where he was, nor greatly cared,
For he was dizzy, busy, and his veins
Fill'd as with lightning — for his spirit shared
The hour, as is the case with lively brains;
And where the hottest fire was seen and heard,
And the loud cannon peal'd his hoarsest strains,
He rush'd, while earth and air were sadly shaken
By thy humane discovery, Friar Bacon!

XXXIV

And as he rush'd along, it came to pass he
Fell in with what was late the second column,
Under the orders of the General Lascy,
But now reduced, as is a bulky volume
Into an elegant extract (much less massy)
Of heroism, and took his place with solemn
Air 'midst the rest, who kept their valiant faces
And levell'd weapons still against the glacis.

XXXV

Just at this crisis up came Johnson too,
Who had 'retreated,' as the phrase is when
Men run away much rather than go through
Destruction's jaws into the devil's den;
But Johnson was a clever fellow, who
Knew when and how 'to cut and come again,'
And never ran away, except when running
Was nothing but a valorous kind of cunning.

XXXVI

And so, when all his corps were dead or dying,
Except Don Juan, a mere novice, whose
More virgin valour never dreamt of flying
From ignorance of danger, which indues
Its votaries, like innocence relying
On its own strength, with careless nerves and thews, —
Johnson retired a little, just to rally
Those who catch cold in 'shadows of Death's valley.'

XXXVII

And there, a little shelter'd from the shot,
Which rain'd from bastion, battery, parapet,
Rampart, wall, casement, house, — for there was not
In this extensive city, sore beset

By Christian soldiery, a single spot
Which did not combat like the devil, as yet,
He found a number of Chasseurs, all scatter'd
By the resistance of the chase they batter'd.

XXXVIII

And these he call'd on; and, what 's strange, they came
Unto his call, unlike 'the spirits from
The vasty deep,' to whom you may exclaim,
Says Hotspur, long ere they will leave their home.
Their reasons were uncertainty, or shame
At shrinking from a bullet or a bomb,
And that odd impulse, which in wars or creeds
Makes men, like cattle, follow him who leads.

XXXIX

By Jove! he was a noble fellow, Johnson,
And though his name, than Ajax or Achilles,
Sounds less harmonious, underneath the sun soon
We shall not see his likeness: he could kill his
Man quite as quietly as blows the monsoon
Her steady breath (which some months the same *still* is):
Seldom he varied feature, hue, or muscle,
And could be very busy without bustle;

XL

And therefore, when he ran away, he did so
Upon reflection, knowing that behind
He would find others who would fain be rid so
Of idle apprehensions, which like wind
Trouble heroic stomachs. Though their lids so
Oft are soon closed, all heroes are not blind,
But when they light upon immediate death,
Retire a little, merely to take breath.

XLI

But Johnson only ran off, to return
With many other warriors, as we said,
Unto that rather somewhat misty bourn,
Which Hamlet tells us is a pass of dread.
To Jack howe'er this gave but slight concern:
His soul (like galvanism upon the dead)
Acted upon the living as on wire,
And led them back into the heaviest fire.

XLII

Egad! they found the second time what they
The first time thought quite terrible enough
To fly from, malgré all which people say
Of glory, and all that immortal stuff
Which fills a regiment (besides their pay,
That daily shilling which makes warriors tough) —
They found on their return the self-same welcome,
Which made some *think*, and others *know*, a *hell* come.

XLIII

They fell as thick as harvests beneath hail,
Grass before scythes, or corn below the sickle,
Proving that trite old truth, that life 's as frail
As any other boon for which men stickle.
The Turkish batteries thrash'd them like a flail,
Or a good boxer, into a sad pickle
Putting the very bravest, who were knock'd
Upon the head, before their guns were cock'd.

XLIV

The Turks, behind the traverses and flanks
Of the next bastion, fired away like devils,
And swept, as gales sweep foam away, whole ranks:
However, Heaven knows how, the Fate who levels
Towns, nations, worlds, in her revolving pranks,
So order'd it, amidst these sulphury revels,
That Johnson and some few who had not scamper'd,
Reach'd the interior talus of the rampart.

XLV

First one or two, then five, six, and a dozen,
Came mounting quickly up, for it was now
All neck or nothing, as, like pitch or rosin,
Flame was shower'd forth above, as well 's below,

So that you scarce could say who best had chosen,
The gentlemen that were the first to show
Their martial faces on the parapet,
Or those who thought it brave to wait as yet.

XLVI

But those who scaled, found out that their advance
Was favour'd by an accident or blunder:
The Greek or Turkish Cohorn's ignorance
Had palisado'd in a way you 'd wonder
To see in forts of Netherlands or France
(Though these to our Gibraltar must knock under) —
Right in the middle of the parapet
Just named, these palisades were primly set:

XLVII

So that on either side some nine or ten
Paces were left, whereon you could contrive
To march; a great convenience to our men,
At least to all those who were left alive,
Who thus could form a line and fight again;
And that which farther aided them to strive
Was, that they could kick down the palisades,
Which scarcely rose much higher than grass blades.

XLVIII

Among the first, — I will not say the *first*,
For such precedence upon such occasions
Will oftentimes make deadly quarrels burst
Out between friends as well as allied nations:
The Briton must be bold who really durst
Put to such trial John Bull's partial patience,
As say that Wellington at Waterloo
Was beaten — though the Prussians say so too; —

XLIX

And that if Blucher, Bulow, Gneisenau,
And God knows who besides in 'au' and 'ow,'
Had not come up in time to cast an awe
Into the hearts of those who fought till now
As tigers combat with an empty craw,
The Duke of Wellington had ceased to show
His orders, also to receive his pensions,
Which are the heaviest that our history mentions.

L

But never mind; — 'God save the king!' and kings!
For if *he* don't, I doubt if *men* will longer —
I think I hear a little bird, who sings
The people by and by will be the stronger:
The veriest jade will wince whose harness wrings
So much into the raw as quite to wrong her
Beyond the rules of posting, — and the mob
At last fall sick of imitating Job.

LI

At first it grumbles, then it swears, and then,
Like David, flings smooth pebbles 'gainst a giant;
At last it takes to weapons such as men
Snatch when despair makes human hearts less pliant.
Then comes 'the tug of war;' — 't will come again,
I rather doubt; and I would fain say 'fie on 't,'
If I had not perceived that revolution
Alone can save the earth from hell's pollution.

LII

But to continue: — I say not *the* first,
But of the first, our little friend Don Juan
Walk'd o'er the walls of Ismail, as if nursed
Amidst such scenes — though this was quite a new one
To him, and I should hope to *most*. The thirst
Of glory, which so pierces through and through one,
Pervaded him — although a generous creature,
As warm in heart as feminine in feature.

LIII

And here he was — who upon woman's breast,
Even from a child, felt like a child; howe'er

The man in all the rest might be confest,
To him it was Elysium to be there;
And he could even withstand that awkward test
Which Rousseau points out to the dubious fair,
'Observe your lover when he *leaves* your arms;'
But Juan never left them, while they had charms,

LIV

Unless compell'd by fate, or wave, or wind,
Or near relations, who are much the same.
But *here* he was! — where each tie that can bind
Humanity must yield to steel and flame:
And *he* whose very body was all mind,
Flung here by fate or circumstance, which tame
The loftiest, hurried by the time and place,
Dash'd on like a spurr'd blood-horse in a race.

LV

So was his blood stirr'd while he found resistance,
As is the hunter's at the five-bar gate,
Or double post and rail, where the existence
Of Britain's youth depends upon their weight,
The lightest being the safest: at a distance
He hated cruelty, as all men hate
Blood, until heated — and even then his own
At times would curdle o'er some heavy groan.

LVI

The General Lascy, who had been hard press'd,
Seeing arrive an aid so opportune
As were some hundred youngsters all abreast,
Who came as if just dropp'd down from the moon,
To Juan, who was nearest him, address'd
His thanks, and hopes to take the city soon,
Not reckoning him to be a 'base Bezonian'
(As Pistol calls it), but a young Livonian.

LVII

Juan, to whom he spoke in German, knew
As much of German as of Sanscrit, and
In answer made an inclination to
The general who held him in command;
For seeing one with ribands, black and blue,
Stars, medals, and a bloody sword in hand,
Addressing him in tones which seem'd to thank,
He recognised an officer of rank.

LVIII

Short speeches pass between two men who speak
No common language; and besides, in time
Of war and taking towns, when many a shriek
Rings o'er the dialogue, and many a crime
Is perpetrated ere a word can break
Upon the ear, and sounds of horror chime
In like church-bells, with sigh, howl, groan, yell, prayer,
There cannot be much conversation there.

LIX

And therefore all we have related in
Two long octaves, pass'd in a little minute;
But in the same small minute, every sin
Contrived to get itself comprised within it.
The very cannon, deafen'd by the din,
Grew dumb, for you might almost hear a linnet,
As soon as thunder, 'midst the general noise
Of human nature's agonising voice!

LX

The town was enter'd. Oh eternity! —
'God made the country and man made the town,'
So Cowper says — and I begin to be
Of his opinion, when I see cast down
Rome, Babylon, Tyre, Carthage, Nineveh,
All walls men know, and many never known;
And pondering on the present and the past,
To deem the woods shall be our home at last.

LXI

Of all men, saving Sylla the man-slayer,
Who passes for in life and death most lucky,
Of the great names which in our faces stare,
The General Boon, back-woodsman of Kentucky,
Was happiest amongst mortals anywhere;
For killing nothing but a bear or buck, he
Enjoy'd the lonely, vigorous, harmless days
Of his old age in wilds of deepest maze.

LXII

Crime came not near him — she is not the child
Of solitude; Health shrank not from him — for
Her home is in the rarely trodden wild,
Where if men seek her not, and death be more
Their choice than life, forgive them, as beguiled
By habit to what their own hearts abhor —
In cities caged. The present case in point I
Cite is, that Boon lived hunting up to ninety;

LXIII

And what's still stranger, left behind a name
For which men vainly decimate the throng,
Not only famous, but of that *good* fame,
Without which glory 's but a tavern song —
Simple, serene, the antipodes of shame,
Which hate nor envy e'er could tinge with wrong;
An active hermit, even in age the child
Of Nature, or the man of Ross run wild.

LXIV

'T is true he shrank from men even of his nation,
When they built up unto his darling trees, —
He moved some hundred miles off, for a station
Where there were fewer houses and more ease;
The inconvenience of civilisation
Is, that you neither can be pleased nor please;
But where he met the individual man,
He show'd himself as kind as mortal can.

LXV

He was not all alone: around him grew
A sylvan tribe of children of the chase,
Whose young, unwaken'd world was ever new,
Nor sword nor sorrow yet had left a trace
On her unwrinkled brow, nor could you view
A frown on Nature's or on human face;
The free-born forest found and kept them free,
And fresh as is a torrent or a tree.

LXVI

And tall, and strong, and swift of foot were they,
Beyond the dwarfing city's pale abortions,
Because their thoughts had never been the prey
Of care or gain: the green woods were their portions;
No sinking spirits told them they grew grey,
No fashion made them apes of her distortions;
Simple they were, not savage; and their rifles,
Though very true, were not yet used for trifles.

LXVII

Motion was in their days, rest in their slumbers,
And cheerfulness the handmaid of their toil;
Nor yet too many nor too few their numbers;
Corruption could not make their hearts her soil;
The lust which stings, the splendour which encumbers,
With the free foresters divide no spoil;
Serene, not sullen, were the solitudes
Of this unsighing people of the woods.

LXVIII

So much for Nature: — by way of variety,
Now back to thy great joys, Civilisation!
And the sweet consequence of large society,
War, pestilence, the despot's desolation,

The kingly scourge, the lust of notoriety,
The millions slain by soldiers for their ration,
The scenes like Catherine's boudoir at threescore,
With Ismail's storm to soften it the more.

LXIX

The town was enter'd: first one column made
Its sanguinary way good — then another;
The reeking bayonet and the flashing blade
Clash'd 'gainst the scimitar, and babe and mother
With distant shrieks were heard Heaven to upbraid:
Still closer sulphury clouds began to smother
The breath of morn and man, where foot by foot
The madden'd Turks their city still dispute.

LXX

Koutousow, he who afterward beat back
(With some assistance from the frost and snow)
Napoleon on his bold and bloody track,
It happen'd was himself beat back just now;
He was a jolly fellow, and could crack
His jest alike in face of friend or foe,
Though life, and death, and victory were at stake;
But here it seem'd his jokes had ceased to take:

LXXI

For having thrown himself into a ditch,
Follow'd in haste by various grenadiers,
Whose blood the puddle greatly did enrich,
He climb'd to where the parapet appears;
But there his project reach'd its utmost pitch
('Mongst other deaths the General Ribaupierre's
Was much regretted), for the Moslem men
Threw them all down into the ditch again.

LXXII

And had it not been for some stray troops landing
They knew not where, being carried by the stream
To some spot, where they lost their understanding,
And wander'd up and down as in a dream,
Until they reach'd, as daybreak was expanding,
That which a portal to their eyes did seem, —
The great and gay Koutousow might have lain
Where three parts of his column yet remain.

LXXIII

And scrambling round the rampart, these same troops,
After the taking of the 'Cavalier,'
Just as Koutousow's most 'forlorn' of 'hopes'
Took like chameleons some slight tinge of fear,
Open'd the gate call'd 'Kilia', to the groups
Of baffled heroes, who stood shyly near,
Sliding knee-deep in lately frozen mud,
Now thaw'd into a marsh of human blood.

LXXIV

The Kozacks, or, if so you please, Cossacques
(I don't much pique myself upon orthography,
So that I do not grossly err in facts,
Statistics, tactics, politics, and geography) —
Having been used to serve on horses' backs,
And no great dilettanti in topography
Of fortresses, but fighting where it pleases
Their chiefs to order, — were all cut to pieces.

LXXV

Their column, though the Turkish batteries thunder'd
Upon them, ne'ertheless had reach'd the rampart,
And naturally thought they could have plunder'd
The city, without being farther hamper'd;
But as it happens to brave men, they blunder'd —
The Turks at first pretended to have scamper'd,
Only to draw them 'twixt two bastion corners,
From whence they sallied on those Christian scorners.

LXXVI

Then being taken by the tail — a taking
Fatal to bishops as to soldiers — these
Cossacques were all cut off as day was breaking,
And found their lives were let at a short lease —
But perish'd without shivering or shaking,
Leaving as ladders their heap'd carcasses,
O'er which Lieutenant-Colonel Yesouskoi
March'd with the brave battalion of Polouzki: —

LXXVII

This valiant man kill'd all the Turks he met,
But could not eat them, being in his turn
Slain by some Mussulmans, who would not yet,
Without resistance, see their city burn.
The walls were won, but 't was an even bet
Which of the armies would have cause to mourn:
'T was blow for blow, disputing inch by inch,
For one would not retreat, nor t' other flinch.

LXXVIII

Another column also suffer'd much: —
And here we may remark with the historian,
You should but give few cartridges to such
Troops as are meant to march with greatest glory on:
When matters must be carried by the touch
Of the bright bayonet, and they all should hurry on,
They sometimes, with a hankering for existence,
Keep merely firing at a foolish distance.

LXXIX

A junction of the General Meknop's men
(Without the General, who had fallen some time
Before, being badly seconded just then)
Was made at length with those who dared to climb
The death-disgorging rampart once again;
And though the Turk's resistance was sublime,
They took the bastion, which the Seraskier
Defended at a price extremely dear.

LXXX

Juan and Johnson, and some volunteers,
Among the foremost, offer'd him good quarter,
A word which little suits with Seraskiers,
Or at least suited not this valiant Tartar.
He died, deserving well his country's tears,
A savage sort of military martyr.
An English naval officer, who wish'd
To make him prisoner, was also dish'd:

LXXXI

For all the answer to his proposition
Was from a pistol-shot that laid him dead;
On which the rest, without more intermission,
Began to lay about with steel and lead —
The pious metals most in requisition
On such occasions: not a single head
Was spared; — three thousand Moslems perish'd here,
And sixteen bayonets pierced the Seraskier.

LXXXII

The city 's taken — only part by part —
And death is drunk with gore: there 's not a street
Where fights not to the last some desperate heart
For those for whom it soon shall cease to beat.
Here War forgot his own destructive art
In more destroying Nature; and the heat
Of carnage, like the Nile's sun-sodden slime,
Engender'd monstrous shapes of every crime.

LXXXIII

A Russian officer, in martial tread
Over a heap of bodies, felt his heel
Seized fast, as if 't were by the serpent's head
Whose fangs Eve taught her human seed to feel:
In vain he kick'd, and swore, and writhed, and bled,
And howl'd for help as wolves do for a meal —
The teeth still kept their gratifying hold,
As do the subtle snakes described of old.

LXXXIV

A dying Moslem, who had felt the foot
Of a foe o'er him, snatch'd at it, and bit
The very tendon which is most acute
(That which some ancient Muse or modern wit
Named after thee, Achilles), and quite through 't
He made the teeth meet, nor relinquish'd it
Even with his life — for (but they lie) 't is said
To the live leg still clung the sever'd head.

LXXXV

However this may be, 't is pretty sure
The Russian officer for life was lamed,
For the Turk's teeth stuck faster than a skewer,
And left him 'midst the invalid and maim'd:
The regimental surgeon could not cure
His patient, and perhaps was to be blamed
More than the head of the inveterate foe,
Which was cut off, and scarce even then let go.

LXXXVI

But then the fact 's a fact — and 't is the part
Of a true poet to escape from fiction
Whene'er he can; for there is little art
In leaving verse more free from the restriction
Of truth than prose, unless to suit the mart
For what is sometimes called poetic diction,
And that outrageous appetite for lies
Which Satan angles with for souls, like flies.

LXXXVII

The city 's taken, but not render'd! — No!
There 's not a Moslem that hath yielded sword:
The blood may gush out, as the Danube's flow
Rolls by the city wall; but deed nor word
Acknowledge aught of dread of death or foe:
In vain the yell of victory is roar'd
By the advancing Muscovite — the groan
Of the last foe is echoed by his own.

LXXXVIII

The bayonet pierces and the sabre cleaves,
And human lives are lavish'd everywhere,
As the year closing whirls the scarlet leaves
When the stripp'd forest bows to the bleak air,
And groans; and thus the peopled city grieves,
Shorn of its best and loveliest, and left bare;
But still it falls in vast and awful splinters,
As oaks blown down with all their thousand winters.

LXXXIX

It is an awful topic — but 't is not
My cue for any time to be terrific:
For checker'd as is seen our human lot
With good, and bad, and worse, alike prolific
Of melancholy merriment, to quote
Too much of one sort would be soporific; —
Without, or with, offence to friends or foes,
I sketch your world exactly as it goes.

XC

And one good action in the midst of crimes
Is 'quite refreshing,' in the affected phrase
Of these ambrosial, Pharisaic times,
With all their pretty milk-and-water ways,
And may serve therefore to bedew these rhymes,
A little scorch'd at present with the blaze
Of conquest and its consequences, which
Make epic poesy so rare and rich.

XCI

Upon a taken bastion, where there lay
Thousands of slaughter'd men, a yet warm group
Of murder'd women, who had found their way
To this vain refuge, made the good heart droop
And shudder; — while, as beautiful as May,
A female child of ten years tried to stoop
And hide her little palpitating breast
Amidst the bodies lull'd in bloody rest.

XCII

Two villanous Cossacques pursued the child
With flashing eyes and weapons: match'd with them,
The rudest brute that roams Siberia's wild
Has feelings pure and polish'd as a gem,—
The bear is civilised, the wolf is mild;
And whom for this at last must we condemn?
Their natures? or their sovereigns, who employ
All arts to teach their subjects to destroy?

XCIII

Their sabres glitter'd o'er her little head,
Whence her fair hair rose twining with affright,
Her hidden face was plunged amidst the dead:
When Juan caught a glimpse of this sad sight,
I shall not say exactly what he *said*,
Because it might not solace 'ears polite;'
But what he *did*, was to lay on their backs,
The readiest way of reasoning with Cossacques.

XCIV

One's hip he slash'd, and split the other's shoulder,
And drove them with their brutal yells to seek
If there might be chirurgeons who could solder
The wounds they richly merited, and shriek
Their baffled rage and pain; while waxing colder
As he turn'd o'er each pale and gory cheek,
Don Juan raised his little captive from
The heap a moment more had made her tomb.

XCV

And she was chill as they, and on her face
A slender streak of blood announced how near
Her fate had been to that of all her race;
For the same blow which laid her mother here
Had scarr'd her brow, and left its crimson trace,
As the last link with all she had held dear;
But else unhurt, she open'd her large eyes,
And gazed on Juan with a wild surprise.

XCVI

Just at this instant, while their eyes were fix'd
Upon each other, with dilated glance,
In Juan's look, pain, pleasure, hope, fear, mix'd
With joy to save, and dread of some mischance
Unto his protégée; while hers, transfix'd
With infant terrors, glared as from a trance,
A pure, transparent, pale, yet radiant face,
Like to a lighted alabaster vase;—

XCVII

Up came John Johnson (I will not say '*Jack*,'
For that were vulgar, cold, and commonplace
On great occasions, such as an attack
On cities, as hath been the present case):
Up Johnson came, with hundreds at his back,
Exclaiming;—'Juan! Juan! On, boy! brace
Your arm, and I 'll bet Moscow to a dollar
That you and I will win St. George's collar.

XCVIII

'The Seraskier is knock'd upon the head,
But the stone bastion still remains, wherein
The old Pacha sits among some hundreds dead,
Smoking his pipe quite calmly 'midst the din
Of our artillery and his own: 't is said
Our kill'd, already piled up to the chin,
Lie round the battery; but still it batters,
And grape in volleys, like a vineyard, scatters.

XCIX

'Then up with me!'—But Juan answer'd, 'Look
Upon this child—I saved her—must not leave
Her life to chance; but point me out some nook
Of safety, where she less may shrink and grieve,

And I am with you.' — Whereon Johnson took
A glance around — and shrugg'd — and twitch'd his sleeve
And black silk neckcloth — and replied, 'You 're right;
Poor thing! what 's to be done? I 'm puzzled quite.'

C

Said Juan: 'Whatsoever is to be
Done, I 'll not quit her till she seems secure
Of present life a good deal more than we.'
Quoth Johnson: '*Neither* will I quite ensure;
But at the least *you* may die gloriously.'
Juan replied: 'At least I will endure
Whate'er is to be borne — but not resign
This child, who is parentless, and therefore mine.'

CI

Johnson said: 'Juan, we 've no time to lose;
The child 's a pretty child — a very pretty —
I never saw such eyes — but hark! now choose
Between your fame and feelings, pride and pity; —
Hark! how the roar increases! — no excuse
Will serve when there is plunder in a city; —
I should be loth to march without you, but,
By God! we 'll be too late for the first cut.'

CII

But Juan was immoveable; until
Johnson, who really loved him in his way,
Pick'd out amongst his followers with some skill
Such as he thought the least given up to prey;
And swearing if the infant came to ill
That they should all be shot on the next day;
But if she were deliver'd safe and sound,
They should at least have fifty rubles round,

CIII

And all allowances besides of plunder
In fair proportion with their comrades; — then
Juan consented to march on through thunder,
Which thinn'd at every step their ranks of men:
And yet the rest rush'd eagerly — no wonder,
For they were heated by the hope of gain,
A thing which happens everywhere each day —
No hero trusteth wholly to half pay.

CIV

And such is victory, and such is man!
At least nine tenths of what we call so; — God
May have another name for half we scan
As human beings, or his ways are odd.
But to our subject: a brave Tartar khan —
Or 'sultan,' as the author (to whose nod
In prose I bend my humble verse) doth call
This chieftain — somehow would not yield at all:

CV

But flank'd by *five* brave sons (such is polygamy,
That she spawns warriors by the score, where none
Are prosecuted for that false crime bigamy),
He never would believe the city won
While courage clung but to a single twig. — Am I
Describing Priam's, Peleus', or Jove's son?
Neither — but a good, plain, old, temperate man,
Who fought with his five children in the van.

CVI

To *take* him was the point. The truly brave,
When they behold the brave oppress'd with odds,
Are touch'd with a desire to shield and save; —
A mixture of wild beasts and demi-gods
Are they — now furious as the sweeping wave,
Now moved with pity: even as sometimes nods
The rugged tree unto the summer wind,
Compassion breathes along the savage mind.

CVII

But he would *not* be *taken*, and replied
To all the propositions of surrender
By mowing Christians down on every side,
As obstinate as Swedish Charles at Bender.
His five brave boys no less the foe defied;
Whereon the Russian pathos grew less tender,
As being a virtue, like terrestrial patience,
Apt to wear out on trifling provocations.

CVIII

And spite of Johnson and of Juan, who
Expended all their Eastern phraseology
In begging him, for God's sake, just to show
So much less fight as might form an apology
For *them* in saving such a desperate foe —
He hew'd away, like doctors of theology
When they dispute with sceptics; and with curses
Struck at his friends, as babies beat their nurses.

CIX

Nay, he had wounded, though but slightly, both
Juan and Johnson; whereupon they fell,
The first with sighs, the second with an oath,
Upon his angry sultanship, pell-mell,
And all around were grown exceeding wroth
At such a pertinacious infidel,
And pour'd upon him and his sons like rain,
Which they resisted like a sandy plain

CX

That drinks and still is dry. At last they perish'd —
His second son was levell'd by a shot;
His third was sabred; and the fourth, most cherish'd
Of all the five, on bayonets met his lot;
The fifth, who, by a Christian mother nourish'd,
Had been neglected, ill-used, and what not,
Because deform'd, yet died all game and bottom,
To save a sire who blush'd that he begot him.

CXI

The eldest was a true and tameless Tartar,
As great a scorner of the Nazarene
As ever Mahomet pick'd out for a martyr,
Who only saw the black-eyed girls in green,
Who make the beds of those who won't take quarter
On earth, in Paradise; and when once seen,
Those houris, like all other pretty creatures,
Do just whate'er they please, by dint of features.

CXII

And what they pleased to do with the young khan
In heaven I know not, nor pretend to guess;
But doubtless they prefer a fine young man
To tough old heroes, and can do no less;
And that 's the cause no doubt why, if we scan
A field of battle's ghastly wilderness,
For one rough, weather-beaten, veteran body,
You 'll find ten thousand handsome coxcombs bloody.

CXIII

Your houris also have a natural pleasure
In lopping off your lately married men,
Before the bridal hours have danced their measure
And the sad, second moon grows dim again,
Or dull repentance hath had dreary leisure
To wish him back a bachelor now and then.
And thus your houri (it may be) disputes
Of these brief blossoms the immediate fruits.

CXIV

Thus the young khan, with houris in his sight,
Thought not upon the charms of four young brides,
But bravely rush'd on his first heavenly night.
In short, howe'er *our* better faith derides,
These black-eyed virgins make the Moslems fight,
As though there were one heaven and none besides, —
Whereas, if all be true we hear of heaven
And hell, there must at least be six or seven.

CXV

So fully flash'd the phantom on his eyes,
That when the very lance was in his heart,
He shouted 'Allah !' and saw Paradise
With all its veil of mystery drawn apart,
And bright eternity without disguise
On his soul, like a ceaseless sunrise, dart: —
With prophets, houris, angels, saints, descried
In one voluptuous blaze, — and then he died,

CXVI

But with a heavenly rapture on his face.
The good old khan, who long had ceased to see
Houris, or aught except his florid race
Who grew like cedars round him gloriously —
When he beheld his latest hero grace
The earth, which he became like a fell'd tree,
Paused for a moment, from the fight, and cast
A glance on that slain son, his first and last.

CXVII

The soldiers, who beheld him drop his point,
Stopp'd as if once more willing to concede
Quarter, in case he bade them not 'aroynt!'
As he before had done. He did not heed
Their pause nor signs: his heart was out of joint,
And shook (till now unshaken) like a reed,
As he look'd down upon his children gone,
And felt — though done with life — he was alone.

CXVIII

But 't was a transient tremor: — with a spring
Upon the Russian steel his breast he flung,
As carelessly as hurls the moth her wing
Against the light wherein she dies: he clung
Closer, that all the deadlier they might wring,
Unto the bayonets which had pierced his young;
And throwing back a dim look on his sons,
In one wide wound pour'd forth his soul at once.

CXIX

'T is strange enough — the rough, tough soldiers, who
Spared neither sex nor age in their career
Of carnage, when this old man was pierced through,
And lay before them with his children near,
Touch'd by the heroism of him they slew,
Were melted for a moment: though no tear
Flow'd from their bloodshot eyes, all red with strife,
They honour'd such determined scorn of life.

CXX

But the stone bastion still kept up its fire,
Where the chief pacha calmly held his post:
Some twenty times he made the Russ retire,
And baffled the assaults of all their host;
At length he condescended to inquire
If yet the city's rest were won or lost;
And being told the latter, sent a bey
To answer Ribas' summons to give way.

CXXI

In the mean time, cross-legg'd, with great sang-froid,
Among the scorching ruins he sat smoking
Tobacco on a little carpet; — Troy
Saw nothing like the scene around: — yet looking
With martial stoicism, nought seem'd to annoy
His stern philosophy; but gently stroking
His beard, he puff'd his pipe's ambrosial gales,
As if he had three lives, as well as tails.

CXXII

The town was taken — whether he might yield
Himself or bastion, little matter'd now:
His stubborn valour was no future shield.
Ismail 's no more! The crescent's silver bow

Sunk, and the crimson cross glared o'er the field,
But red with no *redeeming* gore: the glow
Of burning streets, like moonlight on the water,
Was imaged back in blood, the sea of slaughter.

CXXIII

All that the mind would shrink from of excesses;
All that the body perpetrates of bad;
All that we read, hear, dream, of man's distresses;
All that the devil would do if run stark mad;
All that defies the worst which pen expresses;
All by which hell is peopled, or as sad
As hell — mere mortals who their power abuse —
Was here (as heretofore and since) let loose.

CXXIV

If here and there some transient trait of pity
Was shown, and some more noble heart broke through
Its bloody bond, and saved perhaps some pretty
Child, or an aged, helpless man or two —
What 's this in one annihilated city,
Where thousand loves, and ties, and duties grew?
Cockneys of London! Muscadins of Paris!
Just ponder what a pious pastime war is.

CXXV

Think how the joys of reading a Gazette
Are purchased by all agonies and crimes:
Or if these do not move you, don't forget
Such doom may be your own in after-times.
Meantime the Taxes, Castlereagh, and Debt,
Are hints as good as sermons, or as rhymes.
Read your own hearts and Ireland's present story,
Then feed her famine fat with Wellesley's glory.

CXXVI

But still there is unto a patriot nation,
Which loves so well its country and its king,
A subject of sublimest exultation —
Bear it, ye Muses, on your brightest wing!
Howe'er the mighty locust, Desolation,
Strip your green fields, and to your harvests cling,
Gaunt famine never shall approach the throne —
Though Ireland starve, great George weighs twenty stone.

CXXVII

But let me put an end unto my theme:
There was an end of Ismail — hapless town!
Far flash'd her burning towers o'er Danube's stream,
And redly ran his blushing waters down.
The horrid war-whoop and the shriller scream
Rose still; but fainter were the thunders grown:
Of forty thousand who had mann'd the wall,
Some hundreds breathed — the rest were silent all!

CXXVIII

In one thing ne'ertheless 't is fit to praise
The Russian army upon this occasion,
A virtue much in fashion now-a-days,
And therefore worthy of commemoration:
The topic 's tender, so shall be my phrase —
Perhaps the season's chill, and their long station
In winter's depth, or want of rest and victual,
Had made them chaste; — they ravish'd very little.

CXXIX

Much did they slay, more plunder, and no less
Might here and there occur some violation
In the other line; — but not to such excess
As when the French, that dissipated nation,
Take towns by storm: no causes can I guess,
Except cold weather and commiseration;
But all the ladies, save some twenty score,
Were almost as much virgins as before.

CXXX

Some odd mistakes, too, happen'd in the dark,
Which show'd a want of lanterns, or of taste —

Indeed the smoke was such they scarce could mark
Their friends from foes, — besides such things from haste
Occur, though rarely, when there is a spark
Of light to save the venerably chaste:
But six old damsels, each of seventy years,
Were all deflower'd by different grenadiers.

CXXXI

But on the whole their continence was great;
So that some disappointment there ensued
To those who had felt the inconvenient state
Of 'single blessedness,' and thought it good
(Since it was not their fault, but only fate,
To bear these crosses) for each waning prude
To make a Roman sort of Sabine wedding,
Without the expense and the suspense of bedding.

CXXXII

Some voices of the buxom middle-aged
Were also heard to wonder in the din
(Widows of forty were these birds long caged)
'Wherefore the ravishing did not begin!'
But while the thirst for gore and plunder raged,
There was small leisure for superfluous sin;
But whether they escaped or no, lies hid
In darkness — I can only hope they did.

CXXXIII

Suwarrow now was conqueror — a match
For Timour or for Zinghis in his trade.
While mosques and streets, beneath his eyes, like thatch
Blazed, and the cannon's roar was scarce allay'd,
With bloody hands he wrote his first despatch;
And here exactly follows what he said: —
'Glory to *God* and to the Empress!' (*Powers*
Eternal! such names mingled!) 'Ismail 's ours.'

CXXXIV

Methinks these are the most tremendous words,
Since 'Menè, Menè, Tekel,' and 'Upharsin,'
Which hands or pens have ever traced of swords.
Heaven help me! I'm but little of a parson:
What Daniel read was short-hand of the Lord's,
Severe, sublime; the prophet wrote no farce on
The fate of nations; — but this Russ so witty
Could rhyme, like Nero, o'er a burning city.

CXXXV

He wrote this Polar melody, and set it,
Duly accompanied by shrieks and groans,
Which few will sing, I trust, but none forget it —
For I will teach, if possible, the stones
To rise against earth's tyrants. Never let it
Be said that we still truckle unto thrones; —
But ye — our children's children! think how we
Show'd *what things were* before the world was free!

CXXXVI

That hour is not for us, but 't is for you:
And as, in the great joy of your millennium,
You hardly will believe such things were true
As now occur, I thought that I would pen you 'em;
But may their very memory perish too! —
Yet if perchance remember'd, still disdain you 'em
More than you scorn the savages of yore,
Who *painted* their *bare* limbs, but *not* with gore.

CXXXVII

And when you hear historians talk of thrones,
And those that sate upon them, let it be
As we now gaze upon the mammoth's bones,
And wonder what old world such things could see,
Or hieroglyphics on Egyptian stones,
The pleasant riddles of futurity —
Guessing at what shall happily be hid,
As the real purpose of a pyramid.

CXXXVIII

Reader! I have kept my word, — at least so far
As the first Canto promised. You have now
Had sketches of love, tempest, travel, war —
All very accurate, you must allow, 1100
And *epic*, if plain truth should prove no bar;
For I have drawn much less with a long bow
Than my forerunners. Carelessly I sing,
But Phœbus lends me now and then a string,

CXXXIX

With which I still can harp, and carp, and fiddle.
What farther hath befallen or may befall
The hero of this grand poetic riddle,
I by and by may tell you, if at all:
But now I choose to break off in the middle,
Worn out with battering Ismail's stubborn wall, 1110
While Juan is sent off with the despatch,
For which all Petersburgh is on the watch.

CXL

This special honour was conferr'd, because
He had behaved with courage and humanity —
Which *last* men like, when they have time to pause
From their ferocities produced by vanity.
His little captive gain'd him some applause
For saving her amidst the wild insanity
Of carnage, — and I think he was more glad in her
Safety, than his new order of St. Vladimir.

CXLI

The Moslem orphan went with her protector, 1121
For she was homeless, houseless, helpless; all
Her friends, like the sad family of Hector,
Had perish'd in the field or by the wall:
Her very place of birth was but a spectre
Of what it had been; there the Muezzin's call
To prayer was heard no more! — and Juan wept,
And made a vow to shield her, which he kept.

CANTO THE NINTH

I

Oh, Wellington! (or 'Villainton' — for Fame
Sounds the heroic syllables both ways;
France could not even conquer your great name,
But punn'd it down to this facetious phrase —
Beating or beaten she will laugh the same),
You have obtain'd great pensions and much praise:
Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,
Humanity would rise, and thunder 'Nay!'

II

I don't think that you used Kinnaird quite well
In Marinèt's affair — in fact, 't was shabby, 10
And like some other things won't do to tell
Upon your tomb in Westminster's old abbey.
Upon the rest 't is not worth while to dwell,
Such tales being for the tea-hours of some tabby;
But though your years as *man* tend fast to zero,
In fact your grace is still but a *young hero*.

III

Though Britain owes (and pays you too) so much,
Yet Europe doubtless owes you greatly more:
You have repair'd Legitimacy's crutch,
A prop not quite so certain as before: 20
The Spanish, and the French, as well as Dutch,
Have seen, and felt, how strongly you *restore*;
And Waterloo has made the world your debtor
(I wish your bards would sing it rather better).

IV

You are 'the best of cut-throats:' — do not start;
The phrase is Shakspeare's, and not misapplied:
War 's a brain-spattering, windpipe-slitting art,
Unless her cause by right be sanctified.

If you have acted *once* a generous part,
The world, not the world's masters, will decide,
And I shall be delighted to learn who,
Save you and yours, have gain'd by Waterloo?

V

I am no flatterer — you 've supp'd full of flattery:
They say you like it too — 't is no great wonder.
He whose whole life has been assault and battery,
At last may get a little tired of thunder;
And swallowing eulogy much more than satire, he
May like being praised for every lucky blunder,
Call'd 'Saviour of the Nations' — not yet saved,
And 'Europe's Liberator' — still enslaved.

VI

I 've done. Now go and dine from off the plate
Presented by the Prince of the Brazils,
And send the sentinel before your gate
A slice or two from your luxurious meals:
He fought, but has not fed so well of late.
Some hunger, too, they say the people feels: —
There is no doubt that you deserve your ration,
But pray give back a little to the nation.

VII

I don't mean to reflect — a man so great as
You, my lord duke! is far above reflection:
The high Roman fashion, too, of Cincinnatus,
With modern history has but small connection:
Though as an Irishman you love potatoes,
You need not take them under your direction;
And half a million for your Sabine farm
Is rather dear! — I 'm sure I mean no harm.

VIII

Great men have always scorn'd great recompenses:
Epaminondas saved his Thebes, and died,
Not leaving even his funeral expenses:
George Washington had thanks and nought beside,
Except the all-cloudless glory (which few men's is)
To free his country: Pitt too had his pride,
And as a high-soul'd minister of state is
Renown'd for ruining Great Britain gratis.

IX

Never had mortal man such opportunity,
Except Napoleon, or abused it more:
You might have freed fallen Europe from the unity
Of tyrants, and been blest from shore to shore:
And *now* — what *is* your fame? Shall the Muse tune it ye?
Now — that the rabble 's first vain shouts are o'er?
Go! hear it in your famish'd country's cries!
Behold the world! and curse your victories!

X

As these new cantos touch on warlike feats,
To *you* the unflattering Muse deigns to inscribe
Truths, that you will not read in the Gazettes,
But which 't is time to teach the hireling tribe
Who fatten on their country's gore, and debts,
Must be recited, and — without a bribe.
You *did great* things; but not being *great* in mind,
Have left *undone* the *greatest* — and mankind.

XI

Death laughs — Go ponder o'er the skeleton
With which men image out the unknown thing
That hides the past world, like to a set sun
Which still elsewhere may rouse a brighter spring —
Death laughs at all you weep for: — look upon
This hourly dread of all! whose *threaten'd sting*

Turns life to terror, even though in its sheath:
Mark how its lipless mouth grins without breath!

XII

Mark how it laughs and scorns at all you are!
And yet *was* what you are: from *ear* to *ear*
It *laughs not* — there is now no fleshy bar
So call'd; the Antic long hath ceased to *hear*,
But still he *smiles;* and whether near or far,
He strips from man that mantle (far more dear
Than even the tailor's), his incarnate skin,
White, black, or copper — the dead bones will grin.

XIII

And thus Death laughs, — it is sad merriment,
But still it *is* so; and with such example
Why should not Life be equally content
With his superior, in a smile to trample
Upon the nothings which are daily spent
Like bubbles on an ocean much less ample
Than the eternal deluge, which devours
Suns as rays — worlds like atoms — years like hours?

XIV

'To be, or not to be? that is the question,'
Says Shakspeare, who just now is much in fashion.
I am neither Alexander nor Hephæstion,
Nor ever had for *abstract* fame much passion;
But would much rather have a sound digestion
Than Buonaparte's cancer: could I dash on
Through fifty victories to shame or fame —
Without a stomach what were a good name?

XV

'O dura ilia messorum!' — 'Oh
Ye rigid guts of reapers!' I translate
For the great benefit of those who know
What indigestion is — that inward fate
Which makes all Styx through one small liver flow.
A peasant's sweat is worth his lord's estate:
Let *this* one toil for bread — *that* rack for rent,
He who sleeps best may be the most content.

XVI

'To be, or not to be?' — Ere I decide,
I should be glad to know that which *is being?*
'T is true we speculate both far and wide,
And deem, because we *see*, we are *all-seeing:*
For my part, I 'll enlist on neither side,
Until I see both sides for once agreeing.
For me, I sometimes think that life is death,
Rather than life a mere affair of breath.

XVII

'Que scais-je?' was the motto of Montaigne,
As also of the first academicians:
That all is dubious which man may attain,
Was one of their most favourite positions.
There 's no such thing as certainty, that 's plain
As any of Mortality's conditions;
So little do we know what we 're about in
This world, I doubt if doubt itself be doubting.

XVIII

It is a pleasant voyage perhaps to float,
Like Pyrrho, on a sea of speculation;
But what if carrying sail capsize the boat?
Your wise men don't know much of navigation;
And swimming long in the abyss of thought
Is apt to tire: a calm and shallow station
Well nigh the shore, where one stoops down and gathers
Some pretty shell, is best for moderate bathers.

XIX

'But heaven,' as Cassio says, 'is above all —
No more of this, then, — let us pray!' We have
Souls to save, since Eve's slip and Adam's fall,
Which tumbled all mankind into the grave,

Besides fish, beasts, and birds. 'The sparrow's fall
Is special providence,' though how it gave
Offence, we know not; probably it perch'd
Upon the tree which Eve so fondly search'd.

XX

Oh, ye immortal gods! what is theogony?
Oh, thou too, mortal man! what is philanthropy?
Oh, world! which was and is, what is cosmogony?
Some people have accused me of misanthropy;
And yet I know no more than the mahogany
That forms this desk, of what they mean; *lykanthropy*
I comprehend, for without transformation
Men become wolves on any slight occasion.

XXI

But I, the mildest, meekest of mankind,
Like Moses, or Melancthon, who have ne'er
Done anything exceedingly unkind, —
And (though I could not now and then forbear
Following the bent of body or of mind)
Have always had a tendency to spare, —
Why do they call me misanthrope? Because
They hate me, not I them: — and here we 'll pause.

XXII

'T is time we should proceed with our good poem, —
For I maintain that it is really good,
Not only in the body but the proem,
However little both are understood
Just now, — but by and by the Truth will show 'em
Herself in her sublimest attitude:
And till she doth, I fain must be content
To share her beauty and her banishment.

XXIII

Our hero (and, I trust, kind reader, yours)
Was left upon his way to the chief city
Of the immortal Peter's polish'd boors
Who still have shown themselves more brave than witty.
I know its mighty empire now allures
Much flattery — even Voltaire's, and that 's a pity.
For me, I deem an absolute autocrat
Not a barbarian, but much worse than that.

XXIV

And I will war, at least in words (and — should
My chance so happen — deeds), with all who war
With Thought; — and of Thought's foes by far most rude,
Tyrants and sycophants have been and are.
I know not who may conquer: if I could
Have such a prescience, it should be no bar
To this my plain, sworn, downright detestation
Of every depotism in every nation.

XXV

It is not that I adulate the people:
Without *me*, there are demagogues enough,
And infidels, to pull down every steeple,
And set up in their stead some proper stuff.
Whether they may sow scepticism to reap hell,
As is the Christian dogma rather rough,
I do not know; — I wish men to be free
As much from mobs as kings — from you as me.

XXVI

The consequence is, being of no party,
I shall offend all parties: never mind!
My words, at least, are more sincere and hearty
Than if I sought to sail before the wind.
He who has nought to gain can have small art: he
Who neither wishes to be bound nor bind,
May still expatiate freely, as will I,
Nor give my voice to slavery's jackal cry.

XXVII

That 's an appropriate simile, *that jackal*; —
I 've heard them in the Ephesian ruins howl
By night, as do that mercenary pack all,
Power's base purveyors, who for pickings prowl,
And scent the prey their masters would attack all.

However, the poor jackals are less foul
(As being the brave lions' keen providers)
Than human insects, catering for spiders.

XXVIII

Raise but an arm! 't will brush their web away,
And without *that*, their poison and their claws
Are useless. Mind, good people! what I say
(Or rather peoples) — *go on* without pause!
The web of these tarantulas each day
Increases, till you shall make common cause:
None, save the Spanish fly and Attic bee,
As yet are strongly stinging to be free.

XXIX

Don Juan, who had shone in the late slaughter,
Was left upon his way with the despatch,
Where blood was talk'd of as we would of water;
And carcasses that lay as thick as thatch
O'er silenced cities, merely served to flatter
Fair Catherine's pastime — who look'd on the match
Between these nations as a main of cocks,
Wherein she liked her own to stand like rocks.

XXX

And there in a *kibitka* he roll'd on
(A cursed sort of carriage without springs,
Which on rough roads leaves scarcely a whole bone),
Pondering on glory, chivalry, and kings,
And orders, and on all that he had done —
And wishing that post-horses had the wings
Of Pegasus, or at the least post-chaises
Had feathers, when a traveller on deep ways is.

XXXI

At every jolt — and they were many — still
He turn'd his eyes upon his little charge,
As if he wish'd that she should fare less ill
Than he, in these sad highways left at large
To ruts, and flints, and lovely Nature's skill,
Who is no paviour, nor admits a barge
On *her* canals, where God takes sea and land,
Fishery and farm, both into his own hand.

XXXII

At least he pays no rent, and has best right
To be the first of what we used to call
'Gentlemen farmers' — a race worn out quite,
Since lately there have been no rents at all,
And 'gentlemen' are in a piteous plight,
And 'farmers' can't raise Ceres from her fall:
She fell with Buonaparte — What strange thoughts
Arise, when we see emperors fall with oats!

XXXIII

But Juan turn'd his eyes on the sweet child
Whom he had saved from slaughter — what a trophy!
Oh! ye who build up monuments, defiled
With gore, like Nadir Shah, that costive sophy,
Who, after leaving Hindostan a wild,
And scarce to the Mogul a cup of coffee
To soothe his woes withal, was slain, the sinner!
Because he could no more digest his dinner; —

XXXIV

Oh ye! or we! or he! or she! reflect,
That *one* life saved, especially if young
Or pretty, is a thing to recollect
Far sweeter than the greenest laurels sprung
From the manure of human clay, though deck'd
With all the praises ever said or sung:
Though hymn'd by every harp, unless within
Your heart joins chorus, Fame is but a din.

XXXV

Oh! ye great authors luminous, voluminous!
Ye twice ten hundred thousand daily scribes!
Whose pamphlets, volumes, newspapers, illumine us!
Whether you 're paid by government in bribes,

To prove the public debt is not consuming us —
Or, roughly treading on the 'courtier's kibes'
With clownish heel, your popular circulation
Feeds you by printing half the realm's starvation; —

XXXVI

Oh, ye great authors! — 'Apropos des bottes,' —
I have forgotten what I meant to say,
As sometimes have been greater sages' lots;
'T was something calculated to allay
All wrath in barracks, palaces, or cots:
Certes it would have been but thrown away,
And that 's one comfort for my lost advice,
Although no doubt it was beyond all price.

XXXVII

But let it go: — it will one day be found
With other relics of 'a former world,'
When this world shall be *former*, underground,
Thrown topsy-turvy, twisted, crisp'd, and curl'd,
Baked, fried, or burnt, turn'd inside-out, or drown'd,
Like all the worlds before, which have been hurl'd
First out of, and then back again to chaos,
The superstratum which will overlay us.

XXXVIII

So Cuvier says; — and then shall come again
Unto the new creation, rising out
From our old crash, some mystic, ancient strain
Of things destroy'd and left in airy doubt:
Like to the notions we now entertain
Of Titans, giants, fellows of about
Some hundred feet in height, *not* to say *miles*,
And mammoths, and your wingèd crocodiles.

XXXIX

Think if then George the Fourth should be dug up!
How the new worldlings of the then new East
Will wonder where such animals could sup!
(For they themselves will be but of the least:
Even worlds miscarry, when too oft they pup,
And every new creation hath decreased
In size, from overworking the material —
Men are but maggots of some huge Earth's burial.)

XL

How will — to these young people, just thrust out
From some fresh Paradise, and set to plough,
And dig, and sweat, and turn themselves about,
And plant, and reap, and spin, and grind, and sow,
Till all the arts at length are brought about,
Especially of war and taxing, — how,
I say, will these great relics, when they see 'em,
Look like the monsters of a new museum?

XLI

But I am apt to grow too metaphysical:
'The time is out of joint,' — and so am I;
I quite forget this poem 's merely quizzical,
And deviate into matters rather dry.
I ne'er decide what I shall say, and this I call
Much too poetical: men should know why
They write, and for what end; but, note or text,
I never know the word which will come next.

XLII

So on I ramble, now and then narrating,
Now pondering: — it is time we should narrate.
I left Don Juan with his horses baiting —
Now we 'll get o'er the ground at a great rate.
I shall not be particular in stating
His journey, we 've so many tours of late:
Suppose him then at Petersburgh; suppose
That pleasant capital of painted snows;

XLIII

Suppose him in a handsome uniform, —
A scarlet coat, black facings, a long plume,
Waving, like sails new shiver'd in a storm,
Over a cock'd hat in a crowded room,
And brilliant breeches, bright as a Cairn Gorme,
Of yellow casimere we may presume,
White stocking drawn uncurdled as new milk
O'er limbs whose symmetry set off the silk;

XLIV

Suppose him sword by side, and hat in hand,
Made up by youth, fame, and an army tailor —
That great enchanter, at whose rod's command
Beauty springs forth, and Nature's self turns paler,
Seeing how Art can make her work more grand
(When she don't pin men's limbs in like a gaoler), —
Behold him placed as if upon a pillar! He
Seems Love turn'd a lieutenant of artillery: —

XLV

His bandage slipp'd down into a cravăt;
His wings subdued to epaulettes; his quiver
Shrunk to a scabbard, with his arrows at
His side as a small sword, but sharp as ever;
His bow converted into a cock'd hat;
But still so like, that Psyche were more clever
Than some wives (who make blunders no less stupid),
If she had not mistaken him for Cupid.

XLVI

The courtiers stared, the ladies whisper'd, and
The empress smiled: the reigning favourite frown'd —
I quite forget which of them was in hand
Just then; as they are rather numerous found,
Who took by turns that difficult command
Since first her majesty was singly crown'd:
But they were mostly nervous six-foot fellows,
All fit to make a Patagonian jealous.

XLVII

Juan was none of these, but slight and slim,
Blushing and beardless; and yet ne'ertheless
There was a something in his turn of limb,
And still more in his eye, which seem'd to express,
That though he look'd one of the seraphim,
There lurk'd a man beneath the spirit's dress.
Besides, the empress sometimes liked a boy,
And had just buried the fair-faced Lanskoi.

XLVIII

No wonder then that Yermoloff, or Momonoff,
Or Scherbatoff, or any other *off*
Or *on*, might dread her majesty had not room enough
Within her bosom (which was not too tough)
For a new flame; a thought to cast of gloom enough
Along the aspect, whether smooth or rough,
Of him who, in the language of his station,
Then held that 'high official situation.'

XLIX

O, gentle ladies! should you seek to know
The import of this diplomatic phrase,
Bid Ireland's Londonderry's Marquess show
His parts of speech; and in the strange displays
Of that odd string of words, all in a row,
Which none divine, and every one obeys,
Perhaps you may pick out some queer *no* meaning,
Of that weak wordy harvest the sole gleaning.

L

I think I can explain myself without
That sad inexplicable beast of prey —
That Sphinx, whose words would ever be a doubt,
Did not his deeds unriddle them each day —

That monstrous hieroglyphic — that long spout
Of blood and water, leaden Castlereagh!
And here I must an anecdote relate,
But luckily of no great length or weight.

LI

An English lady ask'd of an Italian,
What were the actual and official duties
Of the strange thing some women set a value on,
Which hovers oft about some married beauties,
Called 'Cavalier servente?' — a Pygmalion
Whose statues warm (I fear, alas! too true 't is)
Beneath his art. The dame, press'd to disclose them,
Said — 'Lady, I beseech you to *suppose them.*'

LII

And thus I supplicate your supposition,
And mildest, matron-like interpretation,
Of the imperial favourite's condition.
'T was a high place, the highest in the nation
In fact, if not in rank; and the suspicion
Of any one's attaining to his station,
No doubt gave pain, where each new pair of shoulders,
If rather broad, made stocks rise and their holders.

LIII

Juan, I said, was a most beauteous boy,
And had retain'd his boyish look beyond
The usual hirsute seasons which destroy,
With beards and whiskers, and the like, the fond
Parisian aspect which upset old Troy
And founded Doctors' Commons: — I have conn'd
The history of divorces, which, though chequer'd,
Calls Ilion's the first damages on record.

LIV

And Catherine, who loved all things (save her lord,
Who was gone to his place), and pass'd for much
Admiring those (by dainty dames abhorr'd)
Gigantic gentlemen, yet had a touch
Of sentiment; and he she most adored
Was the lamented Lanskoi, who was such
A lover as had cost her many a tear,
And yet but made a middling grenadier.

LV

Oh thou 'teterrima causa' of all 'belli' —
Thou gate of life and death — thou nondescript!
Whence is our exit and our entrance, — well I
May pause in pondering how all souls are dipt
In thy perennial fountain: — how man *fell* I
Know not, since knowledge saw her branches stript
Of her first fruit; but how he falls and rises
Since, *thou* hast settled beyond all surmises.

LVI

Some call thee 'the worst cause of war,' but I
Maintain thou art the *best*: for after all
From thee we come, to thee we go, and why
To get at thee not batter down a wall,
Or waste a world? since no one can deny
Thou dost replenish worlds both great and small:
With, or without thee, all things at a stand
Are, or would be, thou sea of life's dry land!

LVII

Catherine, who was the grand epitome
Of that great cause of war, or peace, or what
You please (it causes all the things which be,
So you may take your choice of this or that) —
Catherine, I say, was very glad to see
The handsome herald, on whose plumage sat
Victory; and pausing as she saw him kneel
With his despatch, forgot to break the seal.

LVIII

Then recollecting the whole empress, nor
Forgetting quite the woman (which composed
At least three parts of this great whole), she tore
The letter open with an air which posed

The court, that watch'd each look her visage wore,
Until a royal smile at length disclosed
Fair weather for the day. Though rather spacious,
Her face was noble, her eyes fine, mouth gracious.

LIX

Great joy was hers, or rather joys: the first
Was a ta'en city, thirty thousand slain.
Glory and triumph o'er her aspect burst,
As an East Indian sunrise on the main.
These quench'd a moment her ambition's thirst —
So Arab deserts drink in summer's rain:
In vain! — As fall the dews on quenchless sands,
Blood only serves to wash Ambition's hands!

LX

Her next amusement was more fanciful;
She smiled at mad Suwarrow's rhymes, who threw
Into a Russian couplet rather dull
The whole gazette of thousands whom he slew.
Her third was feminine enough to annul
The shudder which runs naturally through
Our veins, when things call'd sovereigns think it best
To kill, and generals turn it into jest.

LXI

The two first feelings ran their course complete,
And lighted first her eye, and then her mouth:
The whole court look'd immediately most sweet,
Like flowers well water'd after a long drouth.
But when on the lieutenant at her feet
Her majesty, who liked to gaze on youth
Almost as much as on a new despatch,
Glanced mildly, all the world was on the watch.

LXII

Though somewhat large, exuberant, and truculent,
When *wroth* — while *pleased*, she was as fine a figure
As those who like things rosy, ripe, and succulent,
Would wish to look on, while they are in vigour.
She could repay each amatory look you lent
With interest, and in turn was wont with rigour
To exact of Cupid's bills the full amount
At sight, nor would permit you to discount.

LXIII

With her the latter, though at times convenient,
Was not so necessary; for they tell
That she was handsome, and though fierce *look'd* lenient,
And always used her favourites too well.
If once beyond her boudoir's precincts in ye went,
Your 'fortune' was in a fair way 'to swell
A man' (as Giles says); for though she would widow all
Nations, she liked man as an individual.

LXIV

What a strange thing is man! and what a stranger
Is woman! What a whirlwind is her head,
And what a whirlpool full of depth and danger
Is all the rest about her! Whether wed
Or widow, maid or mother, she can change her
Mind like the wind: whatever she has said
Or done, is light to what she 'll say or do; —
The oldest thing on record, and yet new!

LXV

Oh Catherine! (for of all interjections,
To thee both *oh!* and *ah!* belong of right
In love and war) how odd are the connections
Of human thoughts, which jostle in their flight!
Just now *yours* were cut out in different sections:
First Ismail's capture caught your fancy quite;
Next of new knights, the fresh and glorious batch;
And *thirdly* he who brought you the despatch!

LXVI

Shakspeare talks of 'the herald Mercury
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;'
And some such visions cross'd her majesty,
While her young herald knelt before her still.
'T is very true the hill seem'd rather high,
For a lieutenant to climb up; but skill
Smooth'd even the Simplon's steep, and by God's blessing
With youth and health all kisses are 'heaven-kissing.'

LXVII

Her majesty look'd down, the youth look'd up —
And so they fell in love; — she with his face,
His grace, his God-knows-what: for Cupid's cup
With the first draught intoxicates apace,
A quintessential laudanum or 'black drop,'
Which makes one drunk at once, without the base
Expedient of full bumpers; for the eye
In love drinks all life's fountains (save tears) dry.

LXVIII

He, on the other hand, if not in love,
Fell into that no less imperious passion,
Self-love — which, when some sort of thing above
Ourselves, a singer, dancer, much in fashion,
Or duchess, princess, empress, 'deigns to prove'
('T is Pope's phrase) a great longing, though a rash one,
For one especial person out of many,
Makes us believe ourselves as good as any.

LXIX

Besides, he was of that delighted age
Which makes all female ages equal — when
We don't much care with whom we may engage,
As bold as Daniel in the lion's den,
So that we can our native sun assuage
In the next ocean, which may flow just then,
To make a twilight in, just as Sol's heat is
Quench'd in the lap of the salt sea, or Thetis.

LXX

And Catherine (we must say thus much for Catherine),
Though bold and bloody, was the kind of thing
Whose temporary passion was quite flattering,
Because each lover look'd a sort of king,
Made up upon an amatory pattern,
A royal husband in all save the *ring* —
Which, being the damn'dest part of matrimony,
Seem'd taking out the sting to leave the honey.

LXXI

And when you add to this, her womanhood
In its meridian, her blue eyes or gray
(The last, if they have soul, are quite as good,
Or better, as the best examples say:
Napoleon's, Mary's (queen of Scotland), should
Lend to that colour a transcendent ray;
And Pallas also sanctions the same hue,
Too wise to look through optics black or blue) —

LXXII

Her sweet smile, and her then majestic figure,
Her plumpness, her imperial condescension,
Her preference of a boy to men much bigger
(Fellows whom Messalina's self would pension),
Her prime of life, just now in juicy vigour
With other *extras*, which we need not mention, —
All these, or any one of these, explain
Enough to make a stripling very vain.

LXXIII

And that 's enough, for love is vanity,
Selfish in its beginning as its end.
Except where 't is a mere insanity,
A maddening spirit which would strive to blend
Itself with beauty's frail inanity,
On which the passion's self seems to depend:
And hence some heathenish philosophers
Make love the main spring of the universe.

LXXIV

Besides Platonic love, besides the love
Of God, the love of sentiment, the loving
Of faithful pairs (I needs must rhyme with dove,
That good old steam-boat which keeps verses moving
'Gainst reason — Reason ne'er was hand-and-glove
With rhyme, but always leant less to improving
The sound than sense) — beside all these pretences
To love, there are those things which words name senses;

LXXV

Those movements, those improvements in our bodies
Which make all bodies anxious to get out
Of their own sand-pits, to mix with a goddess,
For such all women are at first no doubt.
How beautiful that moment! and how odd is
That fever which precedes the languid rout
Of our sensations! What a curious way
The whole thing is of clothing souls in clay!

LXXVI

The noblest kind of love is love Platonical,
To end or to begin with; the next grand
Is that which may be christen'd love canonical,
Because the clergy take the thing in hand;
The third sort to be noted in our chronicle
As flourishing in every Christian land,
Is when chaste matrons to their other ties
Add what may be call'd *marriage in disguise.*

LXXVII

Well, we won't analyse — our story must
Tell for itself: the sovereign was smitten,
Juan much flatter'd by her love, or lust; —
I cannot stop to alter words once written,
And the two are so mix'd with human dust,
That he who *names one*, both perchance may hit on:
But in such matters Russia's mighty empress
Behaved no better than a common sempstress.

LXXVIII

The whole court melted into one wide whisper,
And all lips were applied unto all ears!
The elder ladies' wrinkles curl'd much crisper
As they beheld; the younger cast some leers
On one another, and each lovely lisper
Smiled as she talk'd the matter o'er; but tears
Of rivalship rose in each clouded eye
Of all the standing army who stood by.

LXXIX

All the ambassadors of all the powers
Enquired, Who was this very new young man,
Who promised to be great in some few hours?
Which is full soon — though life is but a span.
Already they beheld the silver showers
Of rubles rain, as fast as specie can,
Upon his cabinet, besides the presents
Of several ribands, and some thousand peasants.

LXXX

Catherine was generous, — all such ladies are:
Love, that great opener of the heart and all
The ways that lead there, be they near or far,
Above, below, by turnpikes great or small, —
Love (though she had a cursèd taste for war,
And was not the best wife, unless we call
Such Clytemnestra, though perhaps 't is better
That one should die, than two drag on the fetter) —

LXXXI

Love had made Catherine make each lover's fortune,
Unlike our own half-chaste Elizabeth,
Whose avarice all disbursements did importune,
If history, the grand liar, ever saith
The truth; and though grief her old age might shorten,
Because she put a favourite to death,

Her vile, ambiguous method of flirtation,
And stinginess, disgrace her sex and station.

LXXXII

But when the levee rose, and all was bustle
In the dissolving circle, all the nations'
Ambassadors began as 't were to hustle
Round the young man with their congratulations.
Also the softer silks were heard to rustle
Of gentle dames, among whose recreations
It is to speculate on handsome faces,
Especially when such lead to high places.

LXXXIII

Juan, who found himself, he knew not how,
A general object of attention, made
His answers with a very graceful bow,
As if born for the ministerial trade.
Though modest, on his unembarrass'd brow
Nature had written 'gentleman.' He said
Little, but to the purpose; and his manner
Flung hovering graces o'er him like a banner.

LXXXIV

An order from her majesty consign'd
Our young lieutenant to the genial care
Of those in office: all the world look'd kind
(As it will look sometimes with the first stare,
Which youth would not act ill to keep in mind),
As also did Miss Protasoff then there,
Named from her mystic office 'l'Eprouveuse,'
A term inexplicable to the Muse.

LXXXV

With *her* then, as in humble duty bound,
Juan retired, — and so will I, until
My Pegasus shall tire of touching ground.
We have just lit on a 'heaven-kissing hill,'
So lofty that I feel my brain turn round,
And all my fancies whirling like a mill;
Which is a signal to my nerves and brain,
To take a quiet ride in some green lane.

CANTO THE TENTH

I

When Newton saw an apple fall, he found
In that slight startle from his contemplation —
'T is *said* (for I 'll not answer above ground
For any sage's creed or calculation) —
A mode of proving that the earth turn'd round
In a most natural whirl, called 'gravitation;'
And this is the sole mortal who could grapple,
Since Adam, with a fall or with an apple.

II

Man fell with apples, and with apples rose,
If this be true; for we must deem the mode
In which Sir Isaac Newton could disclose
Through the then unpaved stars the turnpike road,
A thing to counterbalance human woes:
For ever since immortal man hath glow'd
With all kinds of mechanics, and full soon
Steam-engines will conduct him to the moon.

III

And wherefore this exordium? — Why, just now,
In taking up this paltry sheet of paper,
My bosom underwent a glorious glow,
And my internal spirit cut a caper:
And though so much inferior, as I know,
To those who, by the dint of glass and vapour,
Discover stars and sail in the wind's eye,
I wish to do as much by poesy.

IV

In the wind's eye I have sail'd, and sail; but for
The stars, I own my telescope is dim:
But at least I have shunn'd the common shore,
And leaving land far out of sight, would skim
The ocean of eternity: the roar
Of breakers has not daunted my slight, trim,
But *still* sea-worthy skiff; and she may float
Where ships have founder'd, as doth many a boat.

V

We left our hero, Juan, in the *bloom*
Of favouritism, but not yet in the *blush;*
And far be it from my *Muses* to presume
(For I have more than one Muse at a push)
To follow him beyond the drawing-room:
It is enough that Fortune found him flush
Of youth, and vigour, beauty, and those things
Which for an instant clip enjoyment's wings.

VI

But soon they grow again and leave their nest.
'Oh!' saith the Psalmist, 'that I had a dove's
Pinions to flee away, and be at rest!'
And who that recollects young years and loves, —
Though hoary now, and with a withering breast,
And palsied fancy, which no longer roves
Beyond its dimm'd eye's sphere, — but would much rather
Sigh like his son, than cough like his grandfather?

VII

But sighs subside, and tears (even widows') shrink,
Like Arno in the summer, to a shallow,
So narrow as to shame their wintry brink,
Which threatens inundations deep and yellow!
Such difference doth a few months make. You 'd think
Grief a rich field which never would lie fallow;
No more it doth, its ploughs but change their boys,
Who furrow some new soil to sow for joys.

VIII

But coughs will come when sighs depart — and now
And then before sighs cease; for oft the one
Will bring the other, ere the lake-like brow
Is ruffled by a wrinkle, or the sun
Of life reach'd ten o'clock: and while a glow,
Hectic and brief as summer's day nigh done,
O'erspreads the cheek which seems too pure for clay,
Thousands blaze, love, hope, die, — how happy they!

IX

But Juan was not meant to die so soon.
We left him in the focus of such glory
As may be won by favour of the moon
Or ladies' fancies — rather transitory
Perhaps; but who would scorn the month of June,
Because December, with his breath so hoary,
Must come? Much rather should he court the ray,
To hoard up warmth against a wintry day.

X

Besides, he had some qualities which fix
Middle-aged ladies even more than young:
The former know what 's what; while new-fledged chicks
Know little more of love than what is sung
In rhymes, or dreamt (for fancy will play tricks)
In visions of those skies from whence Love sprung.
Some reckon women by their suns or years,
I rather think the moon should date the dears.

XI

And why? because she 's changeable and chaste.
I know no other reason, whatsoe'er
Suspicious people, who find fault in haste,
May choose to tax me with; which is not fair,
Nor flattering to 'their temper or their taste,'
As my friend Jeffrey writes with such an air:
However, I forgive him, and I trust
He will forgive himself; — if not, I must.

XII

Old enemies who have become new friends
Should so continue — 't is a point of honour;

And I know nothing which could make amends
For a return to hatred: I would shun her
Like garlic, howsoever she extends
Her hundred arms and legs, and fain outrun her.
Old flames, new wives, become our bitterest foes —
Converted foes should scorn to join with those.

XIII

This were the worst desertion: — renegadoes,
Even shuffling Southey, that incarnate lie,
Would scarcely join again the 'reformadoes,'
Whom he forsook to fill the laureate's sty:
And honest men from Iceland to Barbadoes,
Whether in Caledon or Italy,
Should not veer round with every breath, nor seize
To pain, the moment when you cease to please.

XIV

The lawyer and the critic but behold
The baser sides of literature and life,
And nought remains unseen, but much untold,
By those who scour those double vales of strife.
While common men grow ignorantly old,
The lawyer's brief is like the surgeon's knife,
Dissecting the whole inside of a question,
And with it all the process of digestion.

XV

A legal broom 's a moral chimney-sweeper,
And that 's the reason he himself 's so dirty;
The endless soot bestows a tint far deeper
Than can be hid by altering his shirt; he
Retains the sable stains of the dark creeper,
At least some twenty-nine do out of thirty,
In all their habits; — not so *you*, I own;
As Cæsar wore his robe you wear your gown.

XVI

And all our little feuds, at least all *mine*,
Dear Jeffrey, once my most redoubted foe
(As far as rhyme and criticism combine
To make such puppets of us things below),
Are over: Here 's a health to 'Auld Lang Syne!'
I do not know you, and may never know
Your face — but you have acted on the whole
Most nobly, and I own it from my soul.

XVII

And when I use the phrase of 'Auld Lang Syne!'
'T is not address'd to you — the more 's the pity
For me, for I would rather take my wine
With you, than aught (save Scott) in your proud city.
But somehow, — it may seem a schoolboy's whine,
And yet I seek not to be grand nor witty,
But I am half a Scot by birth, and bred
A whole one, and my heart flies to my head, —

XVIII

As 'Auld Lang Syne' brings Scotland, one and all,
Scotch plaids, Scotch snoods, the blue hills, and clear streams,
The Dee, the Don, Balgounie's brig's *black wall*,
All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams
Of what I *then dreamt*, clothed in their own pall,
Like Banquo's offspring; — floating past me seems
My childhood in this childishness of mine:
I care not — 't is a glimpse of 'Auld Lang Syne.'

XIX

And though, as you remember, in a fit
Of wrath and rhyme, when juvenile and curly,
I rail'd at Scots to show my wrath and wit,
Which must be own'd was sensitive and surly,
Yet 't is in vain such sallies to permit,
They cannot quench young feelings fresh and early:
I '*scotch'd* not kill'd' the Scotchman in my blood,
And love the land of 'mountain and of flood.'

XX

Don Juan, who was real, or ideal, —
For both are much the same, since what men think
Exists when the once thinkers are less real
Than what they thought, for mind can never sink,
And 'gainst the body makes a strong appeal;
And yet 't is very puzzling on the brink
Of what is call'd eternity, to stare,
And know no more of what is here, than there; —

XXI

Don Juan grew a very polish'd Russian —
How we won't mention, *why* we need not say:
Few youthful minds can stand the strong concussion
Of any slight temptation in their way;
But *his* just now were spread as is a cushion
Smooth'd for a monarch's seat of honour; gay
Damsels, and dances, revels, ready money,
Made ice seem paradise, and winter sunny.

XXII

The favour of the empress was agreeable;
And though the duty wax'd a little hard,
Young people at his time of life should be able
To come off handsomely in that regard.
He was now growing up like a green tree, able
For love, war, or ambition, which reward
Their luckier votaries, till old age's tedium
Make some prefer the circulating medium.

XXIII

About this time, as might have been anticipated,
Seduced by youth and dangerous examples,
Don Juan grew, I fear, a little dissipated;
Which is a sad thing, and not only tramples
On our fresh feelings, but — as being participated
With all kinds of incorrigible samples
Of frail humanity — must make us selfish,
And shut our souls up in us like a shell-fish.

XXIV

This we pass over. We will also pass
The usual progress of intrigues between
Unequal matches, such as are, alas!
A young lieutenant's with a *not old* queen,
But one who is not so youthful as she was
In all the royalty of sweet seventeen.
Sovereigns may sway materials, but not matter,
And wrinkles, the d——d democrats, won't flatter.

XXV

And Death, the sovereign's sovereign, though the great
Gracchus of all mortality, who levels
With his *Agrarian* laws the high estate
Of him who feasts, and fights, and roars, and revels,
To one small grass-grown patch (which must await
Corruption for its crop) with the poor devils
Who never had a foot of land till now, —
Death 's a reformer, all men must allow.

XXVI

He lived (not Death, but Juan) in a hurry
Of waste, and haste, and glare, and gloss, and glitter,
In this gay clime of bear-skins black and furry —
Which (though I hate to say a thing that 's bitter)
Peep out sometimes, when things are in a flurry,
Through all the 'purple and fine linen,' fitter
For Babylon's than Russia's royal harlot —
And neutralize her outward show of scarlet.

XXVII

And this same state we won't describe: we would
Perhaps from hearsay, or from recollection;
But getting nigh grim Dante's 'obscure wood,'
That horrid equinox, that hateful section
Of human years, that half-way house, that rude
Hut, whence wise travellers drive with circumspection
Life's sad post-horses o'er the dreary frontier
Of age, and looking back to youth, give *one* tear; —

XXVIII

I won't describe, — that is, if I can help
Description; and I won't reflect, — that is,
If I can stave off thought, which — as a whelp
Clings to its teat — sticks to me through the abyss
Of this odd labyrinth; or as the kelp
Holds by the rock; or as a lover's kiss
Drains its first draught of lips: — but, as I said,
I *won't* philosophise, and *will* be read.

XXIX

Juan, instead of courting courts, was courted, —
A thing which happens rarely: this he owed
Much to his youth, and much to his reported
Valour; much also to the blood he show'd,
Like a race-horse; much to each dress he sported,
Which set the beauty off in which he glow'd,
As purple clouds befringe the sun; but most
He owed to an old woman and his post.

XXX

He wrote to Spain: — and all his near relations,
Perceiving he was in a handsome way
Of getting on himself, and finding stations
For cousins also, answer'd the same day.
Several prepared themselves for emigrations;
And eating ices, were o'erheard to say,
That with the addition of a slight pelisse,
Madrid's and Moscow's climes were of a piece.

XXXI

His mother, Donna Inez, finding, too,
That in the lieu of drawing on his banker,
Where his assets were waxing rather few,
He had brought his spending to a handsome anchor, —
Replied, 'that she was glad to see him through
Those pleasures after which wild youth will hanker;
As the sole sign of man's being in his senses
Is, learning to reduce his past expenses.

XXXII

'She also recommended him to God,
And no less to God's Son, as well as Mother,
Warn'd him against Greek worship, which looks odd
In Catholic eyes; but told him, too, to smother
Outward dislike, which don't look well abroad;
Inform'd him that he had a little brother
Born in a second wedlock; and above
All, praised the empress's *maternal* love.

XXXIII

'She could not too much give her approbation
Unto an empress, who preferr'd young men
Whose age, and what was better still, whose nation
And climate, stopp'd all scandal (now and then): —
At home it might have given her some vexation;
But where thermometers sunk down to ten,
Or five, or one, or zero, she could never
Believe that virtue thaw'd before the river.'

XXXIV

Oh for a *forty-parson power* to chant
Thy praise, Hypocrisy! Oh for a hymn
Loud as the virtues thou dost loudly vaunt,
Not practise! Oh for trumps of cherubim!
Or the ear-trumpet of my good old aunt,
Who, though her spectacles at last grew dim,
Drew quiet consolation through its hint,
When she no more could read the pious print.

XXXV

She was no hypocrite at least, poor soul,
But went to heaven in as sincere a way
As any body on the elected roll,
Which portions out upon the judgment day
Heaven's freeholds, in a sort of doomsday scroll,
Such as the conqueror William did repay
His knights with, lotting others' properties
Into some sixty thousand new knights' fees.

XXXVI

I can't complain, whose ancestors are there,
Erneis, Radulphus — eight-and-forty manors
(If that my memory doth not greatly err)
Were their reward for following Billy's banners:
And though I can't help thinking 't was scarce fair
To strip the Saxons of their *hydes*, like tanners;
Yet as they founded churches with the produce,
You 'll deem, no doubt, they put it to a good use.

XXXVII

The gentle Juan flourish'd, though at times
He felt like other plants called sensitive,
Which shrink from touch, as monarchs do from rhymes,
Save such as Southey can afford to give.
Perhaps he long'd in bitter frosts for climes
In which the Neva's ice would cease to live
Before May-day: perhaps, despite his duty,
In royalty's vast arms he sigh'd for beauty:

XXXVIII

Perhaps — but, sans perhaps, we need not seek
For causes young or old: the canker-worm
Will feed upon the fairest, freshest cheek,
As well as further drain the wither'd form:
Care, like a housekeeper, brings every week
His bills in, and however we may storm,
They must be paid: though six days smoothly run,
The seventh will bring blue devils or a dun.

XXXIX

I don't know how it was, but he grew sick:
The empress was alarm'd, and her physician
(The same who physick'd Peter) found the tick
Of his fierce pulse betoken a condition
Which augur'd of the dead, however *quick*
Itself, and show'd a feverish disposition;
At which the whole court was extremely troubled,
The sovereign shock'd, and all his medicines doubled.

XL

Low were the whispers, manifold the rumours:
Some said he had been poison'd by Potemkin;
Others talk'd learnedly of certain tumours,
Exhaustion, or disorders of the same kin;
Some said 't was a concoction of the humours,
Which with the blood too readily will claim kin;
Others again were ready to maintain,
''T was only the fatigue of last campaign.'

XLI

But here is one prescription out of many:
'Sodæ sulphat. ʒvj. ʒfs. Mannæ optim.
Aq. fervent. f. ℥ifs. ʒij. tinct. Sennæ
Haustus' (And here the surgeon came and cupp'd him)
'℞ Pulv. Com. gr. iij. Ipecacuanhæ'
(With more beside if Juan had not stopp'd 'em).
'Bolus Potassæ Sulphuret. sumendus,
Et haustus ter in die capiendus.'

XLII

This is the way physicians mend or end us,
Secundum artem: but although we sneer
In health — when ill, we call them to attend us,
Without the least propensity to jeer:
While that 'hiatus maxime deflendus'
To be fill'd up by spade or mattock's near,
Instead of gliding graciously down Lethe,
We tease mild Baillie, or soft Abernethy.

XLIII

Juan demurr'd at this first notice to
Quit; and though death had threaten'd an ejection,
His youth and constitution bore him through,
And sent the doctors in a new direction.
But still his state was delicate: the hue
Of health but flicker'd with a faint reflection
Along his wasted cheek, and seem'd to gravel
The faculty — who said that he must travel.

XLIV

The climate was too cold, they said, for him,
Meridian-born, to bloom in. This opinion
Made the chaste Catherine look a little grim,
Who did not like at first to lose her minion:
But when she saw his dazzling eye wax dim,
And drooping like an eagle's with clipt pinion,
She then resolved to send him on a mission,
But in a style becoming his condition.

XLV

There was just then a kind of a discussion,
A sort of treaty or negotiation
Between the British cabinet and Russian,
Maintain'd with all the due prevarication
With which great states such things are apt to push on;
Something about the Baltic's navigation,
Hides, train-oil, tallow, and the rights of Thetis,
Which Britons deem their 'uti possidetis.'

XLVI

So Catherine, who had a handsome way
Of fitting out her favourites, conferr'd
This secret charge on Juan, to display
At once her royal splendour, and reward
His services. He kiss'd hands the next day,
Received instructions how to play his card,
Was laden with all kinds of gifts and honours,
Which show'd what great discernment was the donor's.

XLVII

But she was lucky, and luck 's all. Your queens
Are generally prosperous in reigning;
Which puzzles us to know what Fortune means.
But to continue: though her years were waning
Her climacteric teased her like her teens;
And though her dignity brook'd no complaining,
So much did Juan's setting off distress her,
She could not find at first a fit successor.

XLVIII

But time, the comforter, will come at last;
And four-and-twenty hours, and twice that number
Of candidates requesting to be placed,
Made Catherine taste next night a quiet slumber:—
Not that she meant to fix again in haste,
Nor did she find the quantity encumber,
But always choosing with deliberation,
Kept the place open for their emulation.

XLIX

While this high post of honour 's in abeyance,
For one or two days, reader, we request
You 'll mount with our young hero the conveyance
Which wafted him from Petersburgh: the best
Barouche, which had the glory to display once
The fair czarina's autocratic crest,
When, a new Iphigene, she went to Tauris,
Was given to her favourite, and now *bore his.*

L

A bull-dog, and a bullfinch, and an ermine,
All private favourites of Don Juan;—for
(Let deeper sages the true cause determine)
He had a kind of inclination, or
Weakness, for what most people deem mere vermin,
Live animals: an old maid of threescore
For cats and birds more penchant ne'er display'd,
Although he was not old, nor even a maid;—

LI

The animals aforesaid occupied
Their station: there were valets, secretaries,
In other vehicles; but at his side
Sat little Leila, who survived the parries
He made 'gainst Cossacque sabres, in the wide
Slaughter of Ismail. Though my wild Muse varies
Her note, she don't forget the infant girl
Whom he preserved, a pure and living pearl.

LII

Poor little thing! She was as fair as docile,
And with that gentle, serious character,
As rare in living beings as a fossile
Man, 'midst thy mouldy mammoths, 'grand Cuvier!'

Ill fitted was her ignorance to jostle
With this o'erwhelming world, where all must err:
But she was yet but ten years old, and therefore
Was tranquil, though she knew not why or wherefore.

LIII

Don Juan loved her, and she loved him, as
Nor brother, father, sister, daughter love.
I cannot tell exactly what it was;
He was not yet quite old enough to prove
Parental feelings, and the other class,
Call'd brotherly affection, could not move
His bosom, — for he never had a sister:
Ah ! if he had, how much he would have miss'd her !

LIV

And still less was it sensual; for besides
That he was not an ancient debauchee
(Who like sour fruit, to stir their veins' salt tides,
As acids rouse a dormant alkali),
Although (*'t will* happen as our planet guides)
His youth was not the chastest that might be,
There was the purest Platonism at bottom
Of all his feelings — only he forgot 'em.

LV

Just now there was no peril of temptation;
He loved the infant orphan he had saved,
As patriots (now and then) may love a nation;
His pride, too, felt that she was not enslaved
Owing to him; — as also her salvation
Through his means and the church's might be paved.
But one thing 's odd, which here must be inserted,
The little Turk refused to be converted.

LVI

'T was strange enough she should retain the impression
Through such a scene of change, and dread, and slaughter;
But though three bishops told her the transgression,
She show'd a great dislike to holy water:
She also had no passion for confession;
Perhaps she had nothing to confess : — no matter,
Whate'er the cause, the church made little of it —
She still held out that Mahomet was a prophet.

LVII

In fact, the only Christian she could bear
Was Juan; whom she seem'd to have selected
In place of what her home and friends once *were*.
He *naturally* loved what he protected:
And thus they form'd a rather curious pair,
A guardian green in years, a ward connected
In neither clime, time, blood, with her defender;
And yet this want of ties made theirs more tender.

LVIII

They journey'd on through Poland and through Warsaw,
Famous for mines of salt and yokes of iron:
Through Courland also, which that famous farce saw
Which gave her dukes the graceless name of 'Biron.'
'T is the same landscape which the modern Mars saw,
Who march'd to Moscow, led by Fame, the siren !
To lose by one month's frost some twenty years
Of conquest, and his guard of grenadiers.

LIX

Let this not seem an anti-climax: — 'Oh !
My guard ! my old guard !' exclaim'd that god of clay.
Think of the Thunderer's falling down below
Carotid-artery-cutting Castlereagh !
Alas, that glory should be chill'd by snow !
But should we wish to warm us on our way
Through Poland, there is Kosciusko's name
Might scatter fire through ice, like Hecla's flame.

LX

From Poland they came on through Prussia Proper,
And Königsberg the capital, whose vaunt,
Besides some veins of iron, lead, or copper,
Has lately been the great Professor Kant.
Juan, who cared not a tobacco-stopper
About philosophy, pursued his jaunt
To Germany, whose somewhat tardy millions
Have princes who spur more than their postilions.

LXI

And thence through Berlin, Dresden, and the like,
Until he reach'd the castellated Rhine: —
Ye glorious Gothic scenes! how much ye strike
All phantasies, not even excepting mine;
A grey wall, a green ruin, rusty pike,
Make my soul pass the equinoctial line
Between the present and past worlds, and hover
Upon their airy confine, half-seas-over.

LXII

But Juan posted on through Manheim, Bonn,
Which Drachenfels frowns over like a spectre
Of the good feudal times forever gone,
On which I have not time just now to lecture.
From thence he was drawn onwards to Cologne,
A city which presents to the inspector
Eleven thousand maidenheads of bone,
The greatest number flesh hath ever known.

LXIII

From thence to Holland's Hague and Helvoetsluys,
That water-land of Dutchmen and of ditches,
Where juniper expresses its best juice,
The poor man's sparkling substitute for riches.
Senates and sages have condemn'd its use —
But to deny the mob a cordial, which is
Too often all the clothing, meat, or fuel,
Good government has left them, seems but cruel.

LXIV

Here he embark'd, and with a flowing sail
Went bounding for the island of the free,
Towards which the impatient wind blew half a gale;
High dash'd the spray, the bows dipp'd in the sea,
And sea-sick passengers turn'd somewhat pale;
But Juan, season'd, as he well might be,
By former voyages, stood to watch the skiffs
Which pass'd, or catch the first glimpse of the cliffs.

LXV

At length they rose, like a white wall along
The blue sea's border; and Don Juan felt —
What even young strangers feel a little strong
At the first sight of Albion's chalky belt —
A kind of pride that he should be among
Those haughty shopkeepers, who sternly dealt
Their goods and edicts out from pole to pole,
And made the very billows pay them toll.

LXVI

I've no great cause to love that spot of earth,
Which holds what *might have been* the noblest nation;
But though I owe it little but my birth,
I feel a mix'd regret and veneration
For its decaying fame and former worth.
Seven years (the usual term of transportation)
Of absence lay one's old resentments level,
When a man's country 's going to the devil.

LXVII

Alas! could she but fully, truly, know
How her great name is now throughout abhorr'd:
How eager all the earth is for the blow
Which shall lay bare her bosom to the sword;
How all the nations deem her their worst foe,
That worse than *worst of foes*, the once adored
False friend, who held out freedom to mankind,
And now would chain them, to the very mind: —

LXVIII

Would she be proud, or boast herself the free,
Who is but first of slaves? The nations are
In prison, — but the gaoler, what is he?
No less a victim to the bolt and bar.
Is the poor privilege to turn the key
Upon the captive, freedom? He's as far
From the enjoyment of the earth and air
Who watches o'er the chain, as they who wear.

LXIX

Don Juan now saw Albion's earliest beauties,
Thy cliffs, *dear* Dover! harbour, and hotel;
Thy custom-house, with all its delicate duties;
Thy waiters running mucks at every bell;
Thy packets, all whose passengers are booties
To those who upon land or water dwell;
And last, not least, to strangers uninstructed,
Thy long, long bills, whence nothing is deducted.

LXX

Juan, though careless, young, and magnifique,
And rich in rubles, diamonds, cash, and credit,
Who did not limit much his bills per week,
Yet stared at this a little, though he paid it
(His Maggior Duomo, a smart, subtle Greek,
Before him summ'd the awful scroll and read it);
But doubtless as the air, though seldom sunny,
Is free, the respiration's worth the money.

LXXI

On with the horses! Off to Canterbury!
Tramp, tramp o'er pebble, and splash, splash through puddle;
Hurrah! how swiftly speeds the post so merry!
Not like slow Germany, wherein they muddle
Along the road, as if they went to bury
Their fare; and also pause besides, to fuddle
With 'schnapps' — sad dogs! whom 'Hundsfot,' or 'Verflucter,'
Affect no more than lightning a conductor.

LXXII

Now there is nothing gives a man such spirits,
Leavening his blood as cayenne doth a curry,
As going at full speed — no matter where its
Direction be, so 't is but in a hurry,
And merely for the sake of its own merits;
For the less cause there is for all this flurry,
The greater is the pleasure in arriving
At the great *end* of travel — which is driving.

LXXIII

They saw at Canterbury the cathedral;
Black Edward's helm, and Becket's bloody stone,
Were pointed out as usual by the bedral,
In the same quaint, uninterested tone: —
There's glory again for you, gentle reader! All
Ends in a rusty casque and dubious bone,
Half-solved into these sodas or magnesias;
Which form that bitter draught, the human species.

LXXIV

The effect on Juan was of course sublime:
He breathed a thousand Cressys, as he saw
That casque, which never stoop'd except to Time.
Even the bold Churchman's tomb excited awe,
Who died in the then great attempt to climb
O'er kings, who *now* at least *must talk* of law
Before they butcher. Little Leila gazed,
And ask'd why such a structure had been raised:

LXXV

And being told it was 'God's house,' she said
He was well lodged, but only wonder'd how
He suffer'd Infidels in his homestead,
The cruel Nazarenes, who had laid low

His holy temples in the lands which bred
The True Believers: — and her infant brow
Was bent with grief that Mahomet should resign
A mosque so noble, flung like pearls to swine.

LXXVI

On! on! through meadows managed like a garden,
A paradise of hops and high production;
For after years of travel by a bard in
Countries of greater heat, but lesser suction,
A green field is a sight which makes him pardon
The absence of that more sublime construction,
Which mixes up vines, olives, precipices,
Glaciers, volcanos, oranges, and ices.

LXXVII

And when I think upon a pot of beer —
But I won't weep! — and so drive on, postilions!
As the smart boys spurr'd fast in their career,
Juan admired these highways of free millions;
A country in all senses the most dear
To foreigner or native, save some silly ones,
Who 'kick against the pricks' just at this juncture,
And for their pains get only a fresh puncture.

LXXVIII

What a delightful thing 's a turnpike road!
So smooth, so level, such a mode of shaving
The earth, as scarce the eagle in the broad
Air can accomplish, with his wide wings waving.
Had such been cut in Phaeton's time, the god
Had told his son to satisfy his craving
With the York mail; — but onward as we roll,
'Surgit amari aliquid' — the toll!

LXXIX

Alas, how deeply painful is all payment!
Take lives, take wives, take aught except men's purses:
As Machiavel shows those in purple raiment,
Such is the shortest way to general curses.
They hate a murderer much less than a claimant
On that sweet ore which every body nurses; —
Kill a man's family, and he may brook it,
But keep your hands out of his breeches' pocket.

LXXX

So said the Florentine: ye monarchs, hearken
To your instructor. Juan now was borne,
Just as the day began to wane and darken,
O'er the high hill, which looks with pride or scorn
Toward the great city. — Ye who have a spark in
Your veins of Cockney spirit, smile or mourn
According as you take things well or ill; —
Bold Britons, we are now on Shooter's Hill!

LXXXI

The sun went down, the smoke rose up, as from
A half-unquench'd volcano, o'er a space
Which well beseem'd the 'Devil's drawing-room,'
As some have qualified that wondrous place:
But Juan felt, though not approaching *home*,
As one who, though he were not of the race,
Revered the soil, of those true sons the mother,
Who butcher'd half the earth, and bullied t' other.

LXXXII

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and shipping,
Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye
Could reach, with here and there a sail just skipping
In sight, then lost amidst the forestry
Of masts; a wilderness of steeples peeping
On tiptoe through their sea-coal canopy;
A huge, dun cupola, like a foolscap crown
On a fool's head — and there is London Town!

LXXXIII

But Juan saw not this: each wreath of smoke
Appear’d to him but as the magic vapour
Of some alchymic furnace, from whence broke
The wealth of worlds (a wealth of tax and paper):
The gloomy clouds, which o’er it as a yoke
Are bow’d, and put the sun out like a taper,
Were nothing but the natural atmosphere,
Extremely wholesome, though but rarely clear.

LXXXIV

He paused — and so will I; as doth a crew
Before they give their broadside. By and by,
My gentle countrymen, we will renew
Our old acquaintance; and at least I ’ll try
To tell you truths *you* will not take as true,
Because they are so; — a male Mrs. Fry,
With a soft besom will I sweep your halls,
And brush a web or two from off the walls.

LXXXV

Oh Mrs. Fry ! Why go to Newgate ? Why
Preach to poor rogues ? And wherefore not begin
With Carlton, or with other houses ? Try
Your head at harden’d and imperial sin.
To mend the people ’s an absurdity,
A jargon, a mere philanthropic din,
Unless you make their betters better: — Fy !
I thought you had more religion, Mrs. Fry.

LXXXVI

Teach them the decencies of good threescore;
Cure them of tours, hussar and highland dresses;
Tell them that youth once gone returns no more,
That hired huzzas redeem no land’s distresses;
Tell them Sir William Curtis is a bore,
Too dull even for the dullest of excesses,
The witless Falstaff of a hoary Hal,
A fool whose bells have ceased to ring at all.

LXXXVII

Tell them, though it may be perhaps too late,
On life’s worn confine, jaded, bloated, sated,
To set up vain pretence of being great,
’T is not so to be good; and be it stated,
The worthiest kings have ever loved least state;
And tell them — But you won’t, and I have prated
Just now enough; but by and by I ’ll prattle
Like Roland’s horn in Roncesvalles’ battle.

CANTO THE ELEVENTH

I

When Bishop Berkeley said ‘there was no matter,’
And proved it — ’t was no matter what he said:
They say his system ’t is in vain to batter,
Too subtle for the airiest human head;
And yet who can believe it ? I would shatter
Gladly all matters down to stone or lead,
Or adamant, to find the world a spirit,
And wear my head, denying that I wear it.

II

What a sublime discovery ’t was to make the
Universe universal egotism,
That all ’s ideal — *all ourselves:* I ’ll stake the
World (be it what you will) that *that* ’s no schism.
Oh Doubt ! — if thou be’st Doubt, for which some take thee,
But which I doubt extremely — thou sole prism
Of the Truth’s rays, spoil not my draught of spirit !
Heaven’s brandy, though our brain can hardly bear it.

III

For ever and anon comes Indigestion,
(Not the most ‘dainty Ariel’) and perplexes
Our soarings with another sort of question:
And that which after all my spirit vexes,
Is, that I find no spot where man can rest eye on,
Without confusion of the sorts and sexes,

Of beings, stars, and this unriddled wonder,
The world, which at the worst 's a glorious blunder —

IV

If it be chance; or if it be according
To the old text, still better:—lest it should
Turn out so, we 'll say nothing 'gainst the wording,
As several people think such hazards rude.
They 're right; our days are too brief for affording
Space to dispute what *no one* ever could
Decide, and *every body one day* will
Know very clearly — or at least lie still.

V

And therefore will I leave off metaphysical
Discussion, which is neither here nor there:
If I agree that what is, is; then this I call
Being quite perspicuous and extremely fair;
The truth is, I 've grown lately rather phthisical:
I don't know what the reason is — the air
Perhaps; but as I suffer from the shocks
Of illness, I grow much more orthodox.

VI

The first attack at once proved the Divinity
(But *that* I never doubted, nor the Devil);
The next, the Virgin's mystical virginity;
The third, the usual Origin of Evil;
The fourth at once establish'd the whole Trinity
On so uncontrovertible a level,
That I devoutly wish'd the three were four,
On purpose to believe so much the more.

VII

To our theme. — The man who has stood on the Acropolis,
And look'd down over Attica; or he
Who has sail'd where picturesque Constantinople is,
Or seen Timbuctoo, or hath taken tea
In small-eyed China's crockery-ware metropolis,
Or sat amidst the bricks of Nineveh,
May not think much of London's first appearance —
But ask him what he thinks of it a year hence?

VIII

Don Juan had got out on Shooter's Hill;
Sunset the time, the place the same declivity
Which looks along that vale of good and ill
Where London streets ferment in full activity;
While every thing around was calm and still,
Except the creak of wheels, which on their pivot he
Heard, — and that bee-like, bubbling, busy hum
Of cities, that boil over with their scum: —

IX

I say, Don Juan, wrapt in contemplation,
Walk'd on behind his carriage, o'er the summit,
And lost in wonder of so great a nation,
Gave way to 't, since he could not overcome it.
'And here,' he cried, 'is Freedom's chosen station;
Here peals the people's voice, nor can entomb it
Racks, prisons, inquisitions; resurrection
Awaits it, each new meeting or election.

X

'Here are chaste wives, pure lives; here people pay
But what they please; and if that things be dear,
'T is only that they love to throw away
Their cash, to show how much they have a-year.
Here laws are all inviolate; none lay
Traps for the traveller; every highway 's clear:
Here —' he was interrupted by a knife,
With, — 'Damn your eyes! your money or your life!'

XI

These freeborn sounds proceeded from four pads
In ambush laid, who had perceived him loiter
Behind his carriage; and, like handy lads,
Had seized the lucky hour to reconnoitre,
In which the heedless gentleman who gads
Upon the road, unless he prove a fighter,
May find himself within that isle of riches
Exposed to lose his life as well as breeches.

XII

Juan, who did not understand a word
Of English, save their shibboleth, 'God damn!'
And even that he had so rarely heard,
He sometimes thought 't was only their 'Salām,'
Or 'God be with you!'—and 't is not absurd
To think so: for half English as I am
(To my misfortune), never can I say
I heard them wish 'God with you,' save that way;—

XIII

Juan yet quickly understood their gesture,
And being somewhat choleric and sudden,
Drew forth a pocket pistol from his vesture,
And fired it into one assailant's pudding—
Who fell, as rolls an ox o'er in his pasture,
And roar'd out, as he writhed his native mud in,
Unto his nearest follower or henchman,
'Oh Jack! I 'm floor'd by that 'ere bloody Frenchman!'

XIV

On which Jack and his train set off at speed,
And Juan's suite, late scatter'd at a distance,
Came up, all marvelling at such a deed,
And offering, as usual, late assistance.
Juan, who saw the moon's late minion bleed
As if his veins would pour out his existence,
Stood calling out for bandages and lint,
And wish'd he had been less hasty with his flint.

XV

'Perhaps,' thought he, 'it is the country's wont
To welcome foreigners in this way: now
I recollect some innkeepers who don't
Differ, except in robbing with a bow,
In lieu of a bare blade and brazen front.
But what is to be done? I can't allow
The fellow to lie groaning on the road:
So take him up; I 'll help you with the load.'

XVI

But ere they could perform this pious duty,
The dying man cried, 'Hold! I 've got my gruel!
Oh for a glass of *max!* We 've miss'd our booty;
Let me die where I am!' And as the fuel
Of life shrunk in his heart, and thick and sooty
The drops fell from his death-wound, and he drew ill
His breath,—he from his swelling throat untied
A kerchief, crying, 'Give Sal that!'—and died.

XVII

The cravat stain'd with bloody drops fell down
Before Don Juan's feet: he could not tell
Exactly why it was before him thrown,
Nor what the meaning of the man's farewell.
Poor Tom was once a kiddy upon town,
A thorough varmint, and a *real* swell,
Full flash, all fancy, until fairly diddled,
His pockets first and then his body riddled.

XVIII

Don Juan, having done the best he could
In all the circumstances of the case,
As soon as 'Crowner's quest' allow'd, pursued
His travels to the capital apace;—
Esteeming it a little hard he should
In twelve hours' time, and very little space,
Have been obliged to slay a freeborn native
In self-defence: this made him meditative.

XIX

He from the world had cut off a great man,
Who in his time had made heroic bustle.
Who in a row like Tom could lead the van,
Booze in the ken, or at the spellken hustle?
Who queer a flat? Who (spite of Bow-street's ban)
On the high toby-spice so flash the muzzle?

Who on a lark, with black-eyed Sal (his blowing),
So prime, so swell, so nutty, and so knowing?

XX

But Tom 's no more — and so no more of Tom.
Heroes must die; and by God's blessing 't is
Not long before the most of them go home.
Hail! Thamis, hail! Upon thy verge it is
That Juan's chariot, rolling like a drum
In thunder, holds the way it can't well miss,
Through Kennington and all the other 'tons,'
Which makes us wish ourselves in town at once; —

XXI

Through Groves, so call'd as being void of trees
(Like *lucus* from *no* light); through prospects named
Mount Pleasant, as containing nought to please,
Nor much to climb; through little boxes framed
Of bricks, to let the dust in at your ease,
With 'To be let' upon their doors proclaim'd;
Through 'Rows' most modestly call'd 'Paradise,'
Which Eve might quit without much sacrifice; —

XXII

Through coaches, drays, choked turnpikes, and a whirl
Of wheels, and roar of voices, and confusion;
Here taverns wooing to a pint of 'purl,'
There mails fast flying off like a delusion;
There barbers' blocks with periwigs in curl
In windows; here the lamplighter's infusion
Slowly distill'd into the glimmering glass
(For in those days we had not got to gas); —

XXIII

Through this, and much, and more, is the approach
Of travellers to mighty Babylon:
Whether they come by horse, or chaise, or coach,
With slight exceptions, all the ways seem one.
I could say more, but do not choose to encroach
Upon the Guide-book's privilege. The sun
Had set some time, and night was on the ridge
Of twilight, as the party cross'd the bridge, —

XXIV

That 's rather fine. The gentle sound of Thamis —
Who vindicates a moment, too, his stream,
Though hardly heard through multifarious 'damme's' —
The lamps of Westminster's more regular gleam,
The breadth of pavement, and yon shrine where fame is
A spectral resident — whose pallid beam
In shape of moonshine hovers o'er the pile —
Make this a sacred part of Albion's isle.

XXV

The Druids' groves are gone — so much the better:
Stone-Henge is not — but what the devil is it? —
But Bedlam still exists with its sage fetter,
That madmen may not bite you on a visit;
The Bench too seats or suits full many a debtor;
The Mansion House too (though some people quiz it)
To me appears a stiff yet grand erection;
But then the Abbey's worth the whole collection.

XXVI

The line of lights too up to Charing Cross,
Pall Mall, and so forth, have a coruscation
Like gold as in comparison to dross,
Match'd with the Continent's illumination,
Whose cities Night by no means deigns to gloss.
The French were not yet a lamp-lighting nation,
And when they grew so — on their new-found lantern,
Instead of wicks, they made a wicked man turn.

XXVII

A row of gentlemen along the streets
Suspended may illuminate mankind,
As also bonfires made of country seats;
But the old way is best for the purblind:
The other looks like phosphorus on sheets,
A sort of ignis fatuus to the mind,
Which, though 't is certain to perplex and frighten,
Must burn more mildly ere it can enlighten.

XXVIII

But London 's so well lit, that if Diogenes
Could recommence to hunt his *honest man*,
And found him not amidst the various progenies
Of this enormous city's spreading span,
'T were not for want of lamps to aid his dodging his
Yet undiscover'd treasure. What *I* can,
I 've done to find the same throughout life's journey,
But see the world is only one attorney.

XXIX

Over the stones still rattling up Pall Mall,
Through crowds and carriages, but waxing thinner
As thunder'd knockers broke the long seal'd spell
Of doors 'gainst duns, and to an early dinner
Admitted a small party as night fell, —
Don Juan, our young diplomatic sinner,
Pursued his path, and drove past some hotels,
St. James's Palace and St. James's 'Hells.'

XXX

They reach'd the hotel: forth stream'd from the front door
A tide of well-clad waiters, and around
The mob stood, and as usual several score
Of those pedestrian Paphians who abound
In decent London when the daylight 's o'er;
Commodious but immoral, they are found
Useful, like Malthus, in promoting marriage. —
But Juan now is stepping from his carriage

XXXI

Into one of the sweetest of hotels,
Especially for foreigners — and mostly
For those whom favour or whom fortune swells,
And cannot find a bill's small items costly.
There many an envoy either dwelt or dwells
(The den of many a diplomatic lost lie),
Until to some conspicuous square they pass,
And blazon o'er the door their names in brass.

XXXII

Juan, whose was a delicate commission,
Private, though publicly important, bore
No title to point out with due precision
The exact affair on which he was sent o'er.
'T was merely known, that on a secret mission
A foreigner of rank had graced our shore,
Young, handsome, and accomplish'd, who was said
(In whispers) to have turn'd his sovereign's head.

XXXIII

Some rumour also of some strange adventures
Had gone before him, and his wars and loves;
And as romantic heads are pretty painters,
And, above all, an Englishwoman's roves
Into the excursive, breaking the indentures
Of sober reason wheresoe'er it moves,
He found himself extremely in the fashion,
Which serves our thinking people for a passion.

XXXIV

I don't mean that they are passionless, but quite
The contrary; but then 't is in the head;
Yet as the consequences are as bright
As if they acted with the heart instead,
What after all can signify the site
Of ladies' lucubrations? So they lead
In safety to the place for which you start,
What matters if the road be head or heart?

XXXV

Juan presented in the proper place,
To proper placemen, every Russ credential;
And was received with all the due grimace
By those who govern in the mood potential,

Who, seeing a handsome stripling with smooth face,
Thought (what in state affairs is most essential)
That they as easily might *do* the youngster,
As hawks may pounce upon a woodland songster.

XXXVI

They err'd, as aged men will do; but by
And by we 'll talk of that; and if we don't,
'T will be because our notion is not high
Of politicians and their double front,
Who live by lies, yet dare not boldly lie: —
Now what I love in women is, they won't
Or can't do otherwise than lie, but do it
So well, the very truth seems falsehood to it.

XXXVII

And, after all, what is a lie? 'T is but
The truth in masquerade; and I defy
Historians, heroes, lawyers, priests, to put
A fact without some leaven of a lie.
The very shadow of true Truth would shut
Up annals, revelations, poesy,
And prophecy — except it should be dated
Some years before the incidents related.

XXXVIII

Praised be all liars and all lies! Who now
Can tax my mild Muse with misanthropy?
She rings the world's 'Te Deum,' and her brow
Blushes for those who will not: — but to sigh
Is idle; let us like most others bow,
Kiss hands, feet, any part of majesty,
After the good example of 'Green Erin,'
Whose shamrock now seems rather worse for wearing.

XXXIX

Don Juan was presented, and his dress
And mien excited general admiration —
I don't know which was more admired or less:
One monstrous diamond drew much observation,
Which Catherine in a moment of 'ivresse'
(In love or brandy's fervent fermentation)
Bestow'd upon him, as the public learn'd;
And, to say truth, it had been fairly earn'd.

XL

Besides the ministers and underlings,
Who must be courteous to the accredited
Diplomatists of rather wavering kings,
Until their royal riddle 's fully read,
The very clerks, — those somewhat dirty springs
Of office, or the house of office, fed
By foul corruption into streams, — even they
Were hardly rude enough to earn their pay:

XLI

And insolence no doubt is what they are
Employ'd for, since it is their daily labour,
In the dear offices of peace or war;
And should you doubt, pray ask of your next neighbour,
When for a passport, or some other bar
To freedom, he applied (a grief and a bore),
If he found not his spawn of taxborn riches,
Like lap-dogs, the least civil sons of b—s.

XLII

But Juan was received with much 'empressement:' —
These phrases of refinement I must borrow
From our next neighbours' land, where, like a chessman,
There is a move set down for joy or sorrow
Not only in mere talking, but the press. Man
In islands is, it seems, downright and thorough,
More than on continents — as if the sea
(See Billingsgate) made even the tongue more free.

XLIII

And yet the British 'Damme' 's rather Attic:
Your continental oaths are but incontinent,
And turn on things which no aristocratic
Spirit would name, and therefore even I won't anent
This subject quote; as it would be schismatic
In politesse, and have a sound affronting in 't: —

But 'Damme' 's quite ethereal, though too daring —
Platonic blasphemy, the soul of swearing.

XLIV

For downright rudeness, ye may stay at home;
For true or false politeness (and scarce *that*
Now) you may cross the blue deep and white foam —
The first the emblem (rarely though) of what
You leave behind, the next of much you come
To meet. However, 't is no time to chat
On general topics: poems must confine
Themselves to unity, like this of mine.

XLV

In the great world, — which, being interpreted,
Meaneth the west or worst end of a city,
And about twice two thousand people bred
By no means to be very wise or witty,
But to sit up while others lie in bed,
And look down on the universe with pity, —
Juan, as an inveterate patrician,
Was well received by persons of condition.

XLVI

He was a bachelor, which is a matter
Of import both to virgin and to bride,
The former's hymeneal hopes to flatter;
And (should she not hold fast by love or pride)
'T is also of some moment to the latter:
A rib 's a thorn in a wed gallant's side,
Requires decorum, and is apt to double
The horrid sin — and what 's still worse, the trouble.

XLVII

But Juan was a bachelor — of arts,
And parts, and hearts: he danced and sung, and had
An air as sentimental as Mozart's
Softest of melodies; and could be sad
Or cheerful, without any 'flaws or starts,'
Just at the proper time; and though a lad,
Had seen the world — which is a curious sight,
And very much unlike what people write.

XLVIII

Fair virgins blush'd upon him; wedded dames
Bloom'd also in less transitory hues;
For both commodities dwell by the Thames,
The painting and the painted; youth, ceruse,
Against his heart preferr'd their usual claims,
Such as no gentleman can quite refuse:
Daughters admired his dress, and pious mothers
Inquired his income, and if he had brothers.

XLIX

The milliners who furnish 'drapery Misses'
Throughout the season, upon speculation
Of payment ere the honey-moon's last kisses
Have waned into a crescent's coruscation,
Thought such an opportunity as this is,
Of a rich foreigner's initiation,
Not to be overlook'd — and gave such credit,
That future bridegrooms swore, and sigh'd, and paid it.

L

The Blues, that tender tribe who sigh o'er sonnets,
And with the pages of the last Review
Line the interior of their heads or bonnets,
Advanced in all their azure's highest hue:
They talk'd bad French or Spanish, and upon its
Late authors ask'd him for a hint or two;
And which was softest, Russian or Castilian?
And whether in his travels he saw Ilion?

LI

Juan, who was a little superficial,
And not in literature a great Drawcansir,
Examined by this learned and especial
Jury of matrons, scarce knew what to answer:
His duties warlike, loving or official,
His steady application as a dancer,
Had kept him from the brink of Hippocrene,
Which now he found was blue instead of green.

LII

However, he replied at hazard, with
A modest confidence and calm assurance,
Which lent his learned lucubrations pith,
And pass'd for arguments of good endurance.

That prodigy, Miss Araminta Smith
(Who at sixteen translated 'Hercules Furens'
Into as furious English), with her best look,
Set down his sayings in her common-place book.

LIII

Juan knew several languages — as well
He might — and brought them up with skill, in time
To save his fame with each accomplish'd belle,
Who still regretted that he did not rhyme.
There wanted but this requisite to swell
His qualities (with them) into sublime:
Lady Fitz-Frisky, and Miss Mævia Mannish,
Both long'd extremely to be sung in Spanish.

LIV

However, he did pretty well, and was
Admitted as an aspirant to all
The coteries, and, as in Banquo's glass,
At great assemblies or in parties small,
He saw ten thousand living authors pass,
That being about their average numeral;
Also the eighty 'greatest living poets,'
As every paltry magazine can show *its*.

LV

In twice five years the 'greatest living poet,'
Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
Is call'd on to support his claim, or show it,
Although 't is an imaginary thing.
Even I — albeit I'm sure I did not know it,
Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be king —
Was reckon'd a considerable time,
The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.

LVI

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
My Leipsic, and my Mount Saint Jean seems Cain:
'La Belle Alliance' of dunces down at zero,
Now that the Lion 's fall'n, may rise again:
But I will fall at least as fell my hero;
Nor reign at all, or as a *monarch* reign;
Or to some lonely isle of gaolers go,
With turncoat Southey for my turnkey Lowe.

LVII

Sir Walter reign'd before me; Moore and Campbell
Before and after; but now grown more holy,
The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble
With poets almost clergymen, or wholly;
And Pegasus hath a psalmodic amble
Beneath the very Reverend Rowley Powley,
Who shoes the glorious animal with stilts,
A modern Ancient Pistol — by the hilts!

LVIII

Then there 's my gentle Euphues, who, they say,
Sets up for being a sort of *moral me;*
He 'll find it rather difficult some day
To turn out both, or either, it may be.
Some persons think that Coleridge hath the sway;
And Wordsworth has supporters, two or three;
And that deep-mouth'd Bœotian 'Savage Landor'
Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.

LIX

John Keats, who was kill'd off by one critique,
Just as he really promised something great,
If not intelligible, without Greek
Contrived to talk about the gods of late,
Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate;
'T is strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article.

LX

The list grows long of live and dead pretenders
To that which none will gain — or none will know
The conqueror at least; who, ere Time renders
His last award, will have the long grass grow
Above his burnt-out brain, and sapless cinders.
If I might augur, I should rate but low

Their chances; they 're too numerous, like the thirty
Mock tyrants, when Rome's annals wax'd but dirty.

LXI

This is the literary *lower* empire,
Where the prætorian bands take up the matter; —
A 'dreadful trade,' like his who 'gathers samphire,'
The insolent soldiery to soothe and flatter,
With the same feelings as you 'd coax a vampire.
Now, were I once at home, and in good satire,
I 'd try conclusions with those Janizaries,
And show them *what* an intellectual war is.

LXII

I think I know a trick or two, would turn
Their flanks; — but it is hardly worth my while
With such small gear to give myself concern:
Indeed I 've not the necessary bile;
My natural temper 's really aught but stern,
And even my Muse's worst reproof 's a smile;
And then she drops a brief and modern curtsy,
And glides away, assured she never hurts ye.

LXIII

My Juan, whom I left in deadly peril
Amongst live poets and blue ladies, past
With some small profit through that field so sterile,
Being tired in time, and, neither least nor last,
Left it before he had been treated very ill;
And henceforth found himself more gaily class'd
Amongst the higher spirits of the day,
The sun's true son, no vapour, but a ray.

LXIV

His morns he pass'd in business — which, dissected,
Was like all business a laborious nothing
That leads to lassitude, the most infected
And Centaur Nessus garb of mortal clothing,
And on our sofas makes us lie dejected,
And talk in tender horrors of our loathing
All kinds of toil, save for our country's good —
Which grows no better, though 't is time it should.

LXV

His afternoons he pass'd in visits, luncheons,
Lounging and boxing; and the twilight hour
In riding round those vegetable puncheons
Call'd 'Parks,' where there is neither fruit nor flower
Enough to gratify a bee's slight munchings;
But after all it is the only 'bower'
(In Moore's phrase), where the fashionable fair
Can form a slight acquaintance with fresh air.

LXVI

Then dress, then dinner, then awakes the world!
Then glare the lamps, then whirl the wheels, then roar
Through street and square fast flashing chariots hurl'd
Like harness'd meteors; then along the floor
Chalk mimics painting; then festoons are twirl'd;
Then roll the brazen thunders of the door,
Which opens to the thousand happy few
An earthly paradise of 'Or Molu.'

LXVII

There stands the noble hostess, nor shall sink
With the three-thousandth curtsy; there the waltz,
The only dance which teaches girls to think,
Makes one in love even with its very faults.
Saloon, room, hall, o'erflow beyond their brink,
And long the latest of arrivals halts,
'Midst royal dukes and dames condemn'd to climb,
And gain an inch of staircase at a time.

LXVIII

Thrice happy he who, after a survey
Of the good company, can win a corner,

A door that 's *in* or boudoir *out* of the way,
Where he may fix himself like small 'Jack Horner,'
And let the Babel round run as it may,
And look on as a mourner, or a scorner,
Or an approver, or a mere spectator,
Yawning a little as the night grows later.

LXIX

But this won't do, save by and by; and he
Who, like Don Juan, takes an active share,
Must steer with care through all that glittering sea
Of gems and plumes and pearls and silks, to where
He deems it is his proper place to be;
Dissolving in the waltz to some soft air,
Or proudlier prancing with mercurial skill
Where Science marshals forth her own quadrille.

LXX

Or, if he dance not, but hath higher views
Upon an heiress or his neighbour's bride,
Let him take care that that which he pursues
Is not at once too palpably descried.
Full many an eager gentleman oft rues
His haste: impatience is a blundering guide,
Amongst a people famous for reflection,
Who like to play the fool with circumspection.

LXXI

But, if you can contrive, get next at supper;
Or, if forestalled, get opposite and ogle:—
Oh, ye ambrosial moments! always upper
In mind, a sort of sentimental bogle,
Which sits for ever upon memory's crupper,
The ghost of vanish'd pleasures once in vogue! Ill
Can tender souls relate the rise and fall
Of hopes and fears which shake a single ball.

LXXII

But these precautionary hints can touch
Only the common run, who must pursue,
And watch, and ward; whose plans a word too much
Or little overturns; and not the few
Or many (for the number's sometimes such)
Whom a good mien, especially if new,
Or fame, or name, for wit, war, sense, or nonsense,
Permits whate'er they please, or *did* not long since.

LXXIII

Our hero, as a hero, young and handsome,
Noble, rich, celebrated, and a stranger,
Like other slaves of course must pay his ransom,
Before he can escape from so much danger
As will environ a conspicuous man. Some
Talk about poetry, and 'rack and manger,'
And ugliness, disease, as toil and trouble;—
I wish they knew the life of a young noble.

LXXIV

They are young, but know not youth—it is anticipated;
Handsome but wasted, rich without a sou;
Their vigour in a thousand arms is dissipated;
Their cash comes *from*, their wealth goes *to* a Jew;
Both senates see their nightly votes participated
Between the tyrant's and the tribunes' crew;
And having voted, dined, drunk, gamed, and whored,
The family vault receives another lord.

LXXV

'Where is the world?' cries Young, at *eighty*—'Where
The world in which a man was born?' Alas!
Where is the world of *eight* years past? *'T was there*—
I look for it—'t is gone, a globe of glass!
Crack'd, shiver'd, vanish'd, scarcely gazed on, ere
A silent change dissolves the glittering mass.
Statesmen, chiefs, orators, queens, patriots, kings,
And dandies, all are gone on the wind's wings.

LXXVI

Where is Napoleon the Grand? God knows·
Where little Castlereagh? The devil can tell:

Where Grattan, Curran, Sheridan, all those
Who bound the bar or senate in their spell ?
Where is the unhappy Queen, with all her woes ?
And where the Daughter, whom the Isles loved well ?
Where are those martyr'd saints the Five per Cents ?
And where — oh, where the devil are the rents ?

LXXVII

Where 's Brummel ? Dish'd. Where 's Long Pole Wellesley ? Diddled.
Where 's Whitbread ? Romilly ? Where 's George the Third ?
Where is his will ? (That 's not so soon unriddled.)
And where is 'Fum' the Fourth, our 'royal bird ?'
Gone down, it seems, to Scotland to be fiddled
Unto by Sawney's violin, we have heard:
'Caw me, caw thee' — for six months hath been hatching
This scene of royal itch and loyal scratching.

LXXVIII

Where is Lord This ? And where my Lady That ?
The Honourable Mistresses and Misses ?
Some laid aside like an old Opera hat,
Married, unmarried, and remarried (this is
An evolution oft performed of late).
Where are the Dublin shouts — and London hisses ?
Where are the Grenvilles ? Turn'd as usual. Where
My friends the Whigs ? Exactly where they were.

LXXIX

Where are the Lady Carolines and Franceses ?
Divorced or doing thereanent. Ye annals
So brilliant, where the list of routs and dances is, —
Thou Morning Post, sole record of the panels
Broken in carriages, and all the phantasies
Of fashion, — say what streams now fill those channels ?
Some die, some fly, some languish on the Continent,
Because the times have hardly left them *one* tenant.

LXXX

Some who once set their caps at cautious dukes,
Have taken up at length with younger brothers:
Some heiresses have bit at sharpers' hooks:
Some maids have been made wives, some merely mothers;
Others have lost their fresh and fairy looks:
In short, the list of alterations bothers.
There 's little strange in this, but something strange is
The unusual quickness of these common changes.

LXXXI

Talk not of seventy years as age; in seven
I have seen more changes, down from monarchs to
The humblest individual under heaven,
Than might suffice a moderate century through.
I knew that nought was lasting, but now even
Change grows too changeable, without being new:
Nought 's permanent among the human race,
Except the Whigs *not* getting into place.

LXXXII

I have seen Napoleon, who seem'd quite a Jupiter,
Shrink to a Saturn. I have seen a Duke
(No matter which) turn politician stupider,
If that can well be, than his wooden look.
But it is time that I should hoist my 'blue Peter,'
And sail for a new theme: — I have seen — and shook
To see it — the king hiss'd, and then caress'd;
But don't pretend to settle which was best.

LXXXIII

I have seen the Landholders without a rap —
I have seen Joanna Southcote — I have seen —

The House of Commons turn'd to a tax-trap —
I have seen that sad affair of the late Queen —
I have seen crowns worn instead of a fool's cap —
I have seen a Congress doing all that 's mean —
I have seen some nations like o'erloaded asses
Kick off their burthens, meaning the high classes.

LXXXIV

I have seen small poets, and great prosers, and
Interminable — *not eternal* — speakers —
I have seen the funds at war with house and land —
I have seen the country gentlemen turn squeakers —
I have seen the people ridden o'er like sand
By slaves on horseback — I have seen malt liquors
Exchanged for 'thin potations' by John Bull —
I have seen John half detect himself a fool. —

LXXXV

But 'carpe diem,' Juan, 'carpe, carpe!'
To-morrow sees another race as gay
And transient, and devour'd by the same harpy.
'Life 's a poor player,' — then 'play out the play,
Ye villains!' and above all keep a sharp eye
Much less on what you do than what you say:
Be hypocritical, be cautious, be
Not what you *seem*, but always what you *see*.

LXXXVI

But how shall I relate in other cantos
Of what befell our hero in the land,
Which 't is the common cry and lie to vaunt as
A moral country? But I hold my hand —
For I disdain to write an Atalantis;
But 't is as well at once to understand,
You are *not* a moral people, and you know it
Without the aid of too sincere a poet.

LXXXVII

What Juan saw and underwent shall be
My topic, with of course the due restriction
Which is required by proper courtesy;
And recollect the work is only fiction,
And that I sing of neither mine nor me,
Though every scribe, in some slight turn of diction,
Will hint allusions never *meant*. Ne'er doubt
This — when I speak, I *don't hint*, but *speak out*.

LXXXVIII

Whether he married with the third or fourth
Offspring of some sage husband-hunting countess,
Or whether with some virgin of more worth
(I mean in Fortune's matrimonial bounties)
He took to regularly peopling Earth,
Of which your lawful awful wedlock fount is, —
Or whether he was taken in for damages,
For being too excursive in his homages, —

LXXXIX

Is yet within the unread events of time.
Thus far, go forth, thou lay, which I will back
Against the same given quantity of rhyme,
For being as much the subject of attack
As ever yet was any work sublime,
By those who love to say that white is black.
So much the better! — I may stand alone,
But would not change my free thoughts for a throne.

CANTO THE TWELFTH

I

Of all the barbarous middle ages, that
Which is most barbarous is the middle age
Of man; it is — I really scarce know what;
But when we hover between fool and sage,
And don't know justly what we would be at —
A period something like a printed page,

Black letter upon foolscap, while our hair
Grows grizzled, and we are not what we were;—

II

Too old for youth,—too young, at thirty-five,
To herd with boys, or hoard with good threescore,—
I wonder people should be left alive;
But since they are, that epoch is a bore:
Love lingers still, although 't were late to wive;
And as for other love, the illusion 's o'er;
And money, that most pure imagination,
Gleams only through the dawn of its creation.

III

O Gold! Why call we misers miserable?
Theirs is the pleasure that can never pall;
Theirs is the best bower anchor, the chain cable
Which holds fast other pleasures great and small.
Ye who but see the saving man at table,
And scorn his temperate board, as none at all,
And wonder how the wealthy can be sparing,
Know not what visions spring from each cheese-paring.

IV

Love or lust makes man sick, and wine much sicker;
Ambition rends, and gaming gains a loss;
But making money, slowly first, then quicker,
And adding still a little through each cross
(Which *will* come over things), beats love or liquor,
The gamester's counter, or the statesman's *dross*.
O Gold! I still prefer thee unto paper,
Which makes bank credit like a bank of vapour.

V

Who hold the balance of the world? Who reign
O'er congress, whether royalist or liberal?
Who rouse the shirtless patriots of Spain?
(That make old Europe's journals squeak and gibber all.)
Who keep the world, both old and new, in pain
Or pleasure? Who make politics run glibber all?
The shade of Buonaparte's noble daring?—
Jew Rothschild, and his fellow-Christian, Baring.

VI

Those, and the truly liberal Lafitte,
Are the true lords of Europe. Every loan
Is not a merely speculative hit,
But seats a nation or upsets a throne.
Republics also get involved a bit;
Columbia's stock hath holders not unknown
On 'Change; and even thy silver soil, Peru,
Must get itself discounted by a Jew.

VII

Why call the miser miserable? as
I said before: the frugal life is his,
Which in a saint or cynic ever was
The theme of praise: a hermit would not miss
Canonization for the self-same cause,
And wherefore blame gaunt wealth's austerities?
Because, you 'll say, nought calls for such a trial;—
Then there 's more merit in his self-denial.

VIII

He is your only poet;—passion, pure
And sparkling on from heap to heap, displays,
Possess'd, the ore, of which *mere hopes* allure
Nations athwart the deep: the golden rays
Flash up in ingots from the mine obscure;
On him the diamond pours its brilliant blaze,
While the mild emerald's beam shades down the dies
Of other stones, to soothe the miser's eyes.

IX

The lands on either side are his; the ship
From Ceylon, Inde, or far Cathay, unloads

For him the fragrant produce of each trip;
Beneath his cars of Ceres groan the roads,
And the vine blushes like Aurora's lip;
His very cellars might be kings' abodes;
While he, despising every sensual call,
Commands — the intellectual lord of all.

X

Perhaps he hath great projects in his mind,
To build a college, or to found a race,
A hospital, a church, — and leave behind
Some dome surmounted by his meagre face:
Perhaps he fain would liberate mankind
Even with the very ore which makes them base;
Perhaps he would be wealthiest of his nation,
Or revel in the joys of calculation.

XI

But whether all, or each, or none of these
May be the hoarder's principle of action,
The fool will call such mania a disease: —
What is his *own?* Go — look at each transaction,
Wars, revels, loves — do these bring men more ease
Than the mere plodding through each 'vulgar fraction?'
Or do they benefit mankind? Lean miser!
Let spendthrifts' heirs enquire of yours — who 's wiser?

XII

How beauteous are rouleaus! how charming chests
Containing ingots, bags of dollars, coins
(Not of old victors, all whose heads and crests
Weigh not the thin ore where their visage shines,
But) of fine unclipt gold, where dully rests
Some likeness, which the glittering cirque confines,
Of modern, reigning, sterling, stupid stamp: —
Yes! ready money *is* Aladdin's lamp.

XIII

'Love rules the camp, the court, the grove,' — 'for love
Is heaven, and heaven is love:' — so sings the bard;
Which it were rather difficult to prove
(A thing with poetry in general hard).
Perhaps there may be something in 'the grove,'
At least it rhymes to 'love;' but I 'm prepared
To doubt (no less than landlords of their rental)
If 'courts' and 'camps' be quite so sentimental.

XIV

But if Love don't, *Cash* does, and Cash alone:
Cash rules the grove, and fells it too besides;
Without cash, camps were thin, and courts were none;
Without cash, Malthus tells you — 'take no brides.'
So Cash rules Love the ruler, on his own
High ground, as virgin Cynthia sways the tides:
And as for 'Heaven being Love,' why not say honey
Is wax? Heaven is not Love, 't is Matrimony.

XV

Is not all love prohibited whatever,
Excepting marriage? which is love, no doubt,
After a sort; but somehow people never
With the same thought the two words have help'd out:
Love may exist *with* marriage, and *should* ever,
And marriage also may exist without;
But love *sans* bans is both a sin and shame,
And ought to go by quite another name.

XVI

Now if the 'court,' and 'camp,' and 'grove,' be not
Recruited all with constant married men,
Who never coveted their neighbour's lot,
I say *that* line 's a lapsus of the pen; —
Strange too in my 'buon camerado' Scott,
So celebrated for his morals, when
My Jeffrey held him up as an example
To me; — of whom these morals are a sample.

XVII

Well, if I don't succeed, I *have* succeeded,
And that 's enough; succeeded in my youth,

The only time when much success is needed:
And my success produced what I, in sooth,
Cared most about; it need not now be pleaded —
Whate'er it was, 't was mine; I' ve paid, in truth,
Of late the penalty of such success,
But have not learn'd to wish it any less.

XVIII

That suit in Chancery, — which some persons plead
In an appeal to the unborn, whom they,
In the faith of their procreative creed,
Baptize posterity, or future clay, —
To me seems but a dubious kind of reed
To lean on for support in any way;
Since odds are that posterity will know
No more of them, than they of her, I trow.

XIX

Why, I 'm posterity — and so are you;
And whom do we remember? Not a hundred.
Were every memory written down all true,
The tenth or twentieth name would be but blunder'd;
Even Plutarch's Lives have but pick'd out a few,
And 'gainst those few your annalists have thunder'd;
And Mitford in the nineteenth century
Gives, with Greek truth, the good old Greek the lie.

XX

Good people all, of every degree,
Ye gentle readers and ungentle writers,
In this twelfth Canto 't is my wish to be
As serious as if I had for inditers
Malthus and Wilberforce: — the last set free
The Negroes, and is worth a million fighters;
While Wellington has but enslaved the Whites,
And Malthus does the thing 'gainst which he writes.

XXI

I 'm serious — so are all men upon paper;
And why should I not form my speculation,
And hold up to the sun my little taper?
Mankind just now seem wrapt in mediation
On constitutions and steam-boats of vapour;
While sages write against all procreation,
Unless a man can calculate his means
Of feeding brats the moment his wife weans.

XXII

That 's noble! That 's romantic! For my part,
I think that 'Philo-genitiveness' is
(Now here's a word quite after my own heart,
Though there 's a shorter a good deal than this,
If that politeness set it not apart;
But I 'm resolved to say nought that 's amiss) —
I say, methinks that 'Philo-genitiveness'
Might meet from men a little more forgiveness.

XXIII

And now to business. — O my gentle Juan,
Thou art in London — in that pleasant place,
Where every kind of mischief's daily brewing,
Which can await warm youth in its wild race.
'T is true, that thy career is not a new one;
Thou art no novice in the headlong chase
Of early life; but this is a new land,
Which foreigners can never understand.

XXIV

What with a small diversity of climate,
Of hot or cold, mercurial or sedate,
I could send forth my mandate like a primate
Upon the rest of Europe's social state;
But thou art the most difficult to rhyme at,
Great Britain, which the Muse may penetrate.
All countries have their 'Lions,' but in thee
There is but one superb menagerie.

XXV

But I am sick of politics. Begin,
'Paulo Majora.' Juan, undecided
Amongst the paths of being 'taken in,'
Above the ice had like a skater glided:

When tired of play, he flirted without sin
With some of those fair creatures who have prided
Themselves on innocent tantalisation,
And hate all vice except its reputation.

XXVI

But these are few, and in the end they make
Some devilish escapade or stir, which shows
That even the purest people may mistake
Their way through virtue's primrose paths of snows;
And then men stare, as if a new ass spake
To Balaam, and from tongue to ear o'erflows
Quicksilver small talk, ending (if you note it)
With the kind world's amen — 'Who would have thought it?'

XXVII

The little Leila, with her orient eyes,
And taciturn Asiatic disposition
(Which saw all western things with small surprise,
To the surprise of people of condition,
Who think that novelties are butterflies
To be pursued as food for inanition),
Her charming figure and romantic history
Became a kind of fashionable mystery.

XXVIII

The women much divided — as is usual
Amongst the sex in little things or great.
Think not, fair creatures, that I mean to abuse you all —
I have always liked you better than I state:
Since I 've grown moral, still I must accuse you all
Of being apt to talk at a great rate;
And now there was a general sensation
Amongst you, about Leila's education.

XXIX

In one point only were you settled — and
You had reason; 't was that a young child of grace,
As beautiful as her own native land,
And far away, the last bud of her race,
Howe'er our friend Don Juan might command
Himself for five, four, three, or two years' space,
Would be much better taught beneath the eye
Of peeresses whose follies had run dry.

XXX

So first there was a generous emulation,
And then there was a general competition,
To undertake the orphan's education.
As Juan was a person of condition,
It had been an affront on this occasion
To talk of a subscription or petition;
But sixteen dowagers, ten unwed she sages,
Whose tale belongs to 'Hallam's Middle Ages,'

XXXI

And one or two sad, separate wives, without
A fruit to bloom upon their withering bough —
Begg'd to bring *up* the little girl and '*out*,' —
For that 's the phrase that settles all things now,
Meaning a virgin's first blush at a rout,
And all her points as thorough-bred to show:
And I assure you, that like virgin honey
Tastes their first season (mostly if they have money).

XXXII

How all the needy honourable misters,
Each out-at-elbow peer, or desperate dandy,
The watchful mothers, and the careful sisters
(Who, by the by, when clever, are more handy
At making matches, where ''t is gold that glisters,'
Than their *he* relatives), like flies o'er candy
Buzz round '*the* Fortune' with their busy battery,
To turn her head with waltzing and with flattery!

XXXIII

Each aunt, each cousin, hath her speculation;
Nay, married dames will now and then discover
Such pure disinterestedness of passion,
I 've known them court an heiress for their lover.

'Tantæne!' Such the virtues of high station,
Even in the hopeful Isle, whose outlet's 'Dover!'
While the poor rich wretch, object of these cares,
Has cause to wish her sire had had male heirs.

XXXIV

Some are soon bagg'd, and some reject three dozen.
'T is fine to see them scattering refusals
And wild dismay o'er every angry cousin
(Friends of the party), who begin accusals,
Such as—'Unless Miss (Blank) meant to have chosen
Poor Frederick, why did she accord perusals
To his billets? *Why* waltz with him? Why, I pray,
Look *yes* last night, and yet say *no* to-day?

XXXV

'Why?—Why?—Besides, Fred really was *attach'd;*
'T was not her fortune—he has enough without:
The time will come she'll wish that she had snatch'd
So good an opportunity, no doubt:—
But the old marchioness some plan had hatch'd,
As I'll tell Aurea at to-morrow's rout:
And after all poor Frederick may do better—
Pray did you see her answer to his letter?'

XXXVI

Smart uniforms and sparkling coronets
Are spurn'd in turn, until her turn arrives,
After male loss of time, and hearts, and bets
Upon the sweepstakes for substantial wives;
And when at last the pretty creature gets
Some gentleman, who fights, or writes, or drives,
It soothes the awkward squad of the rejected
To find how very badly she selected.

XXXVII

For sometimes they accept some long pursuer,
Worn out with importunity; or fall
(But here perhaps the instances are fewer)
To the lot of him who scarce pursued at all.
A hazy widower turn'd of forty's sure
(If 't is not vain examples to recall)
To draw a high prize: now, howe'er he got her, I
See nought more strange in this than t' other lottery.

XXXVIII

I, for my part (one 'modern instance' more,
'True, 't is a pity—pity 't is, 't is true'),
Was chosen from out an amatory score,
Albeit my years were less discreet than few;
But though I also had reform'd before
Those became one who soon were to be two,
I'll not gainsay the generous public's voice,
That the young lady made a monstrous choice.

XXXIX

Oh, pardon my digression—or at least
Peruse! 'T is always with a moral end
That I dissert, like grace before a feast:
For like an aged aunt, or tiresome friend,
A rigid guardian, or a zealous priest,
My Muse by exhortation means to mend
All people, at all times, and in most places,
Which puts my Pegasus to these grave paces.

XL

But now I'm going to be immoral; now
I mean to show things really as they are,
Not as they ought to be: for I avow,
That till we see what's what in fact, we're far
From much improvement with that virtuous plough
Which skims the surface, leaving scarce a scar
Upon the black loam long manured by Vice,
Only to keep its corn at the old price.

XLI

But first of little Leila we'll dispose;
For like a day-dawn she was young and pure,
Or like the old comparison of snows,
Which are more pure than pleasant to be sure.

Like many people everybody knows,
Don Juan was delighted to secure
A goodly guardian for his infant charge,
Who might not profit much by being at large.

XLII

Besides, he had found out he was no tutor
(I wish that others would find out the same);
And rather wish'd in such things to stand neuter,
For silly wards will bring their guardians blame:
So when he saw each ancient dame a suitor
To make his little wild Asiatic tame,
Consulting 'the Society for Vice
Suppression,' Lady Pinchbeck was his choice.

XLIII

Olden she was — but had been very young;
Virtuous she was — and had been, I believe;
Although the world has such an evil tongue
That — but my chaster ear will not receive
An echo of a syllable that 's wrong:
In fact, there 's nothing makes me so much grieve,
As that abominable tittle-tattle,
Which is the cud eschew'd by human cattle.

XLIV

Moreover I 've remark'd (and I was once
A slight observer in a modest way),
And so may every one except a dunce,
That ladies in their youth a little gay,
Besides their knowledge of the world, and sense
Of the sad consequence of going astray,
Are wiser in their warnings 'gainst the woe
Which the mere passionless can never know.

XLV

While the harsh prude indemnifies her virtue
By railing at the unknown and envied passion,
Seeking far less to save you than to hurt you,
Or, what 's still worse, to put you out of fashion, —
The kinder veteran with calm words will court you,
Entreating you to pause before you dash on;
Expounding and illustrating the riddle
Of epic Love's beginning, end, and middle.

XLVI

Now whether it be thus, or that they are stricter,
As better knowing why they should be so,
I think you 'll find from many a family picture,
That daughters of such mothers as may know
The world by experience rather than by lecture,
Turn out much better for the Smithfield Show
Of vestals brought into the marriage mart,
Than those bred up by prudes without a heart.

XLVII

I said that Lady Pinchbeck had been talk'd about —
As who has not, if female, young, and pretty?
But now no more the ghost of Scandal stalk'd about;
She merely was deem'd amiable and witty,
And several of her best bon-mots were hawk'd about:
Then she was given to charity and pity,
And pass'd (at least the latter years of life)
For being a most exemplary wife.

XLVIII

High in high circles, gentle in her own,
She was the mild reprover of the young,
Whenever — which means every day — they 'd shown
An awkward inclination to go wrong.
The quantity of good she did 's unknown,
Or at the least would lengthen out my song:
In brief, the little orphan of the East
Had raised an interest in her, which increased.

XLIX

Juan, too, was a sort of favourite with her,
Because she thought him a good heart at bottom.

A little spoil'd, but not so altogether;
Which was a wonder, if you think who got him,
And how he had been toss'd, he scarce knew whither:
Though this might ruin others, it did *not* him,
At least entirely — for he had seen too many
Changes in youth, to be surprised at any.

L

And these vicissitudes tell best in youth;
For when they happen at a riper age,
People are apt to blame the Fates, forsooth,
And wonder Providence is not more sage.
Adversity is the first path to truth:
He who hath proved war, storm, or woman's rage,
Whether his winters be eighteen or eighty,
Hath won the experience which is deem'd so weighty.

LI

How far it profits is another matter. —
Our hero gladly saw his little charge
Safe with a lady, whose last grown-up daughter
Being long married, and thus set at large,
Had left all the accomplishments she taught her
To be transmitted, like the Lord Mayor's barge,
To the next comer; or — as it will tell
More Muse-like — like to Cytherea's shell.

LII

I call such things transmission; for there is
A floating balance of accomplishment
Which forms a pedigree from Miss to Miss,
According as their minds or backs are bent.
Some waltz; some draw; some fathom the abyss
Of metaphysics; others are content
With music; the most moderate shine as wits;
While others have a genius turn'd for fits.

LIII

But whether fits, or wits, or harpsichords,
Theology, fine arts, or finer stays,
May be the baits for gentlemen or lords
With regular descent, in these our days,
The last year to the new transfers its hoards;
New vestals claim men's eyes with the same praise
Of 'elegant' *et cætera*, in fresh batches —
All matchless creatures, and yet bent on matches.

LIV

But now I will begin my poem. 'T is
Perhaps a little strange, if not quite new,
That from the first of Cantos up to this
I 've not begun what we have to go through.
These first twelve books are merely flourishes,
Preludios, trying just a string or two
Upon my lyre, or making the pegs sure;
And when so, you shall have the overture.

LV

My Muses do not care a pinch of rosin
About what 's call'd success, or not succeeding:
Such thoughts are quite below the strain they have chosen;
'T is a 'great moral lesson' they are reading.
I thought, at setting off, about two dozen
Cantos would do; but at Apollo's pleading,
If that my Pegasus should not be founder'd,
I think to canter gently through a hundred.

LVI

Don Juan saw that microcosm on stilts,
Yclept the Great World; for it is the least,
Although the highest: but as swords have hilts
By which their power of mischief is increased,
When man in battle or in quarrel tilts,
Thus the low world, north, south, or west, or east,
Must still obey the high — which is their handle,
Their moon, their sun, their gas, their farthing candle.

LVII

He had many friends who had many wives, and was
Well look'd upon by both, to that extent

Of friendship which you may accept or pass,
It does nor good nor harm; being merely meant
To keep the wheels going of the higher class,
And draw them nightly when a ticket 's sent:
And what with masquerades, and fêtes, and balls,
For the first season such a life scarce palls.

LVIII

A young unmarried man, with a good name
And fortune, has an awkward part to play;
For good society is but a game,
'The royal game of Goose,' as I may say,
Where every body has some separate aim,
An end to answer, or a plan to lay —
The single ladies wishing to be double,
The married ones to save the virgins trouble.

LIX

I don't mean this as general, but particular
Examples may be found of such pursuits:
Though several also keep their perpendicular
Like poplars, with good principles for roots;
Yet many have a method more *reticular* —
'Fishers for men,' like sirens with soft lutes:
For talk six times with the same single lady,
And you may get the wedding dresses ready.

LX

Perhaps you 'll have a letter from the mother,
To say her daughter's feelings are trepann'd;
Perhaps you 'll have a visit from the brother,
All strut, and stays, and whiskers, to demand
What 'your intentions are ?' — One way or other
It seems the virgin's heart expects your hand:
And between pity for her case and yours,
You 'll add to Matrimony's list of cures.

LXI

I 've known a dozen weddings made even *thus*,
And some of them high names: I have also known
Young men who — though they hated to discuss
Pretensions which they never dream'd to have shown —
Yet neither frighten'd by a female fuss,
Nor by mustachios moved, were let alone,
And lived, as did the broken-hearted fair,
In happier plight than if they form'd a pair.

LXII

There 's also nightly, to the uninitiated,
A peril — not indeed like love or marriage,
But not the less for this to be depreciated:
It is — I meant and mean not to disparage
The show of virtue even in the vitiated —
It adds an outward grace unto their carriage —
But to denounce the amphibious sort of harlot,
'Couleur de rose,' who 's neither white nor scarlet.

LXIII

Such is your cold coquette, who can't say 'No,'
And won't say 'Yes,' and keeps you on and off-ing
On a lee-shore, till it begins to blow —
Then sees your heart wreck'd, with an inward scoffing.
This works a world of sentimental woe,
And sends new Werters yearly to their coffin;
But yet is merely innocent flirtation,
Not quite adultery, but adulteration.

LXIV

'Ye gods, I grow a talker !' Let us prate.
The next of perils, though I place it *stern*est,
Is when, without regard to 'church or state,'
A wife makes or takes love in upright earnest.

Abroad, such things decide few women's fate —
(Such, early traveller! is the truth thou learnest) —
But in old England, when a young bride errs,
Poor thing! Eve's was a trifling case to hers.

LXV

For 't is a low, newspaper, humdrum, lawsuit
Country, where a young couple of the same ages
Can't form a friendship, but the world o'erawes it.
Then there 's the vulgar trick of those d—d damages!
A verdict — grievous foe to those who cause it! —
Forms a sad climax to romantic homages;
Besides those soothing speeches of the pleaders,
And evidences which regale all readers.

LXVI

But they who blunder thus are raw beginners;
A little genial sprinkling of hypocrisy
Has saved the fame of thousand splendid sinners,
The loveliest oligarchs of our gynocracy;
You may see such at all the balls and dinners,
Among the proudest of our aristocracy,
So gentle, charming, charitable, chaste —
And all by having *tact* as well as taste.

LXVII

Juan, who did not stand in the predicament
Of a mere novice, had one safeguard more;
For he was sick ——no, 't was not the word *sick* I meant —
But he had seen so much good love before,
That he was not in heart so very weak; — I meant
But thus much, and no sneer against the shore
Of white cliffs, white necks, blue eyes, bluer stockings,
Tithes, taxes, duns, and doors with double knockings.

LXVIII

But coming young from lands and scenes romantic,
Where lives, not lawsuits, must be risk'd for Passion,
And Passion's self must have a spice of frantic,
Into a country where 't is half a fashion,
Seem'd to him half commercial, half pedantic,
Howe'er he might esteem this moral nation:
Besides (alas! his taste — forgive and pity!)
At first he did not think the women pretty.

LXIX

I say at *first* — for he found out at *last*,
But by degrees, that they were fairer far
Than the more glowing dames whose lot is cast
Beneath the influence of the eastern star.
A further proof we should not judge in haste;
Yet inexperience could not be his bar
To taste: — the truth is, if men would confess,
That novelties *please* less than they *impress*.

LXX

Though travell'd, I have never had the luck to
Trace up those shuffling negroes, Nile or Niger,
To that impracticable place, Timbuctoo,
Where Geography finds no one to oblige her
With such a chart as may be safely stuck to —
For Europe ploughs in Afric like 'bos piger:'
But if I *had been* at Timbuctoo, there
No doubt I should be told that black is fair.

LXXI

It is. I will not swear that black is white;
But I suspect in fact that white is black,
And the whole matter rests upon eyesight.
Ask a blind man, the best judge. You 'll attack
Perhaps this new position — but I 'm right;
Or if I 'm wrong, I 'll not be ta'en aback: —

He hath no morn nor night, but all is dark
Within; and what seest thou? A dubious spark.

LXXII

But I 'm relapsing into metaphysics,
That labyrinth, whose clue is of the same
Construction as your cures for hectic phthisics,
Those bright moths fluttering round a dying flame;
And this reflection brings me to plain physics,
And to the beauties of a foreign dame,
Compared with those of our pure pearls of price,
Those polar summers, *all* sun, and some ice.

LXXIII

Or say they are like virtuous mermaids, whose
Beginnings are fair faces, ends mere fishes; —
Not that there 's not a quantity of those
Who have a due respect for their own wishes.
Like Russians rushing from hot baths to snows
Are they, at bottom virtuous even when vicious:
They warm into a scrape, but keep of course,
As a reserve, a plunge into remorse.

LXXIV

But this has nought to do with their outsides.
I said that Juan did not think them pretty
At the first blush; for a fair Briton hides
Half her attractions — probably from pity —
And rather calmly into the heart glides,
Than storms it as a foe would take a city;
But once there (if you doubt this, prithee try)
She keeps it for you like a true ally.

LXXV

She cannot step as does an Arab barb,
Or Andalusian girl from mass returning,
Nor wear as gracefully as Gauls her garb,
Nor in her eye Ausonia's glance is burning;
Her voice, though sweet, is not so fit to warble
those bravuras (which I still am learning
To like, though I have been seven years in Italy,
And have, or had, an ear that served me prettily); —

LXXVI

She cannot do these things, nor one or two
Others, in that off-hand and dashing style
Which takes so much — to give the devil his due;
Nor is she quite so ready with her smile,
Nor settles all things in one interview
(A thing approved as saving time and toil); —
But though the soil may give you time and trouble,
Well cultivated, it will render double.

LXXVII

And if in fact she takes to a 'grande passion,'
It is a very serious thing indeed:
Nine times in ten 't is but caprice or fashion,
Coquetry, or a wish to take the lead,
The pride of a mere child with a new sash on,
Or wish to make a rival's bosom bleed:
But the tenth instance will be a tornado,
For there 's no saying what they will or may do.

LXXVIII

The reason 's obvious; if there 's an éclat,
They lose their caste at once, as do the Parias;
And when the delicacies of the law
Have fill'd their papers with their comments various,
Society, that china without flaw
(The hypocrite!), will banish them like Marius,
To sit amidst the ruins of their guilt:
For Fame 's a Carthage not so soon rebuilt.

LXXIX

Perhaps this is as it should be; — it is
A comment on the Gospel's 'Sin no more,

And be thy sins forgiven:' — but upon this
I leave the saints to settle their own score.
Abroad, though doubtless they do much amiss,
An erring woman finds an opener door
For her return to Virtue — as they call
That lady, who should be at home to all.

LXXX

For me, I leave the matter where I find it,
Knowing that such uneasy virtue leads
People some ten times less in fact to mind it,
And care but for discoveries and not deeds.
And as for chastity, you 'll never bind it
By all the laws the strictest lawyer pleads,
But aggravate the crime you have not prevented,
By rendering desperate those who had else repented.

LXXXI

But Juan was no casuist, nor had ponder'd
Upon the moral lessons of mankind:
Besides, he had not seen of several hundred
A lady altogether to his mind.
A little 'blasé' — 't is not to be wonder'd
At, that his heart had got a tougher rind:
And though not vainer from his past success,
No doubt his sensibilities were less.

LXXXII

He also had been busy seeing sights —
The Parliament and all the other houses;
Had sat beneath the gallery at nights,
To hear debates whose thunder *roused* (not *rouses*)
The world to gaze upon those northern lights
Which flash'd as far as where the musk-bull browses;
He had also stood at times behind the throne —
But Grey was not arrived, and Chatham gone.

LXXXIII

He saw, however, at the closing session,
That noble sight, when *really* free the nation,
A king in constitutional possession
Of such a throne as is the proudest station,
Though despots know it not — till the progression
Of freedom shall complete their education.
'T is not mere splendour makes the show august
To eye or heart — it is the people's trust.

LXXXIV

There, too, he saw (whate'er he may be now)
A Prince, the prince of princes at the time,
With fascination in his very bow,
And full of promise, as the spring of prime.
Though royalty was written on his brow,
He had *then* the grace, too, rare in every clime,
Of being, without alloy of fop or beau,
A finish'd gentleman from top to toe.

LXXXV

And Juan was received, as hath been said,
Into the best society: and there
Occurr'd what often happens, I 'm afraid,
However disciplined and debonnaire: —
The talent and good humour he display'd,
Besides the mark'd distinction of his air,
Exposed him, as was natural, to temptation,
Even though himself avoided the occasion.

LXXXVI

But what, and where, with whom, and when, and why,
Is not to be put hastily together;
And as my object is morality
(Whatever people say), I don't know whether
I 'll leave a single reader's eyelid dry,
But harrow up his feelings till they wither,
And hew out a huge monument of pathos,
As Philip's son proposed to do with Athos.

LXXXVII

Here the twelfth Canto of our introduction
Ends. When the body of the book 's begun,

You 'll find it of a different construction
From what some people say 't will be when done:
The plan at present 's simply in concoction,
I can't oblige you, reader, to read on;
That 's your affair, not mine: a real spirit
Should neither court neglect, nor dread to bear it.

LXXXVIII

And if my thunderbolt not always rattles,
Remember, reader ! you have had before
The worst of tempests and the best of battles
That e'er were brew'd from elements or gore,
Besides the most sublime of — Heaven knows what else:
An usurer could scarce expect much more —
But my best canto, save one on astronomy,
Will turn upon 'political economy.'

LXXXIX

That is your present theme for popularity:
Now that the public hedge hath scarce a stake,
It grows an act of patriotic charity,
To show the people the best way to break.
My plan (but I, if but for singularity,
Reserve it) will be very sure to take.
Meantime, read all the national debt-sinkers,
And tell me what you think of your great thinkers.

CANTO THE THIRTEENTH

I

I NOW mean to be serious; — it is time,
Since laughter now-a-days is deem'd too serious.
A jest at Vice by Virtue 's call'd a crime,
And critically held as deleterious:
Besides, the sad 's a source of the sublime,
Although when long a little apt to weary us;
And therefore shall my lay soar high and solemn,
As an old temple dwindled to a column.

II

The Lady Adeline Amundeville
('T is an old Norman name, and to be found
In pedigrees, by those who wander still
Along the last fields of that Gothic ground)
Was high-born, wealthy by her father's will,
And beauteous, even where beauties most abound,
In Britain — which of course true patriots find
The goodliest soil of body and of mind.

III

I 'll not gainsay them; it is not my cue;
I 'll leave them to their taste, no doubt the best:
An eye 's an eye, and whether black or blue,
Is no great matter, so 't is in request,
'T is nonsense to dispute about a hue —
The kindest may be taken as a test.
The fair sex should be always fair; and no man,
Till thirty, should perceive there 's a plain woman.

IV

And after that serene and somewhat dull
Epoch, that awkward corner turn'd for days
More quiet, when our moon 's no more at full,
We may presume to criticise or praise;
Because indifference begins to lull
Our passions, and we walk in wisdom's ways;
Also because the figure and the face
Hint, that 't is time to give the younger place.

V

I know that some would fain postpone this era,
Reluctant as all placemen to resign
Their post; but theirs is merely a chimera,
For they have pass'd life's equinoctial line:
But then they have their claret and Madeira
To irrigate the dryness of decline;
And county meetings, and the parliament,
And debt, and what not, for their solace sent.

VI

And is there not religion, and reform,
Peace, war, the taxes, and what 's call'd the 'Nation'?

The struggle to be pilots in a storm?
The landed and the monied speculation?
The joys of mutual hate to keep them warm,
Instead of love, that mere hallucination?
Now hatred is by far the longest pleasure;
Men love in haste, but they detest at leisure.

VII

Rough Johnson, the great moralist, profess'd,
Right honestly, 'he liked an honest hater!'—
The only truth that yet has been confest
Within these latest thousand years or later.
Perhaps the fine old fellow spoke in jest:—
For my part, I am but a mere spectator,
And gaze where'er the palace or the hovel is,
Much in the mode of Goethe's Mephistopheles;

VIII

But neither love nor hate in much excess;
Though 't was not once so. If I sneer sometimes,
It is because I cannot well do less,
And now and then it also suits my rhymes.
I should be very willing to redress
Men's wrongs, and rather check than punish crimes,
Had not Cervantes, in that too true tale
Of Quixote, shown how all such efforts fail.

IX

Of all tales 't is the saddest—and more sad,
Because it makes us smile: his hero 's right,
And still pursues the right;—to curb the bad
His only object, and 'gainst odds to fight
His guerdon: 't is his virtue makes him mad!
But his adventures form a sorry sight;
A sorrier still is the great moral taught
By that real epic unto all who have thought.

X

Redressing injury, revenging wrong,
To aid the damsel and destroy the caitiff;
Opposing singly the united strong,
From foreign yoke to free the helpless native:—
Alas! must noblest views, like an old song,
Be for mere fancy 's sport a theme creative,
A jest, a riddle, Fame through thin and thick sought!
And Socrates himself but Wisdom's Quixote?

XI

Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away;
A single laugh demolish'd the right arm
Of his own country;—seldom since that day
Has Spain had heroes. While Romance could charm,
The world gave ground before her bright array;
And therefore have his volumes done such harm,
That all their glory, as a composition,
Was dearly purchased by his land's perdition.

XII

I 'm 'at my old lunes'—digression, and forget
The Lady Adeline Amundeville;
The fair most fatal Juan ever met,
Although she was not evil nor meant ill;
But Destiny and Passion spread the net
(Fate is a good excuse for our own will),
And caught them;—what do they *not* catch, methinks?
But I 'm not Œdipus, and life 's a Sphinx.

XIII

I tell the tale as it is told, nor dare
To venture a solution: 'Davus sum!'
And now I will proceed upon the pair.
Sweet Adeline, amidst the gay world's hum,
Was the Queen-Bee, the glass of all that 's fair;
Whose charms made all men speak, and women dumb.
The last 's a miracle, and such was reckon'd,
And since that time there has not been a second.

XIV

Chaste was she, to detraction's desperation,
And wedded unto one she had loved well—
A man known in the councils of the nation,
Cool, and quite English, imperturbable,

Though apt to act with fire upon occasion,
Proud of himself and her: the world could tell
Nought against either, and both seem'd secure —
She in her virtue, he in his hauteur.

XV

It chanced some diplomatical relations,
Arising out of business, often brought
Himself and Juan in their mutual stations
Into close contact. Though reserved, nor caught
By specious seeming, Juan's youth, and patience,
And talent, on his haughty spirit wrought,
And form'd a basis of esteem, which ends
In making men what courtesy calls friends.

XVI

And thus Lord Henry, who was cautious as
Reserve and pride could make him, and full slow
In judging men — when once his judgment was
Determined, right or wrong, on friend or foe,
Had all the pertinacity pride has,
Which knows no ebb to its imperious flow,
And loves or hates, disdaining to be guided,
Because its own good pleasure hath decided.

XVII

His friendships, therefore, and no less aversions,
Though oft well founded, which confirm'd but more
His prepossessions, like the laws of Persians
And Medes, would ne'er revoke what went before.
His feelings had not those strange fits, like tertians,
Of common likings, which make some deplore
What they should laugh at — the mere ague still
Of men's regard, the fever or the chill.

XVIII

‘’T is not in mortals to command success:
But *do you more*, Sempronius — *don't* deserve it,’
And take my word, you won't have any less.
Be wary, watch the time, and always serve it;
Give gently way, when there 's too great a press;
And for your conscience, only learn to nerve it,
For, like a racer, or a boxer training,
'T will make, if proved, vast efforts without paining.

XIX

Lord Henry also liked to be superior,
As most men do, the little or the great;
The very lowest find out an inferior,
At least they think so, to exert their state
Upon: for there are very few things wearier
Than solitary Pride's oppressive weight,
Which mortals generously would divide,
By bidding others carry while they ride.

XX

In birth, in rank, in fortune likewise equal,
O'er Juan he could no distinction claim;
In years he had the advantage of time's sequel;
And, as he thought, in country much the same —
Because bold Britons have a tongue and free quill,
At which all modern nations vainly aim;
And the Lord Henry was a great debater,
So that few members kept the house up later.

XXI

These were advantages: and then he thought —
It was his foible, but by no means sinister —
That few or none more than himself had caught
Court mysteries, having been himself a minister:
He liked to teach that which he had been taught,
And greatly shone whenever there had been a stir;
And reconciled all qualities which grace man,
Always a patriot, and sometimes a placeman.

XXII

He liked the gentle Spaniard for his gravity;
He almost honour'd him for his docility;
Because, though young, he acquiesced with suavity,
Or contradicted but with proud humility.
He knew the world, and would not see depravity
In faults which sometimes show the soil's fertility,
If that the weeds o'erlive not the first crop —
For then they are very difficult to stop.

XXIII

And then he talk'd with him about Madrid,
Constantinople, and such distant places;
Where people always did as they were bid,
Or did what they should not with foreign graces.
Of coursers also spake they: Henry rid
Well, like most Englishmen, and loved the races;
And Juan, like a true-born Andalusian,
Could back a horse, as despots ride a Russian.

XXIV

And thus acquaintance grew, at noble routs,
And diplomatic dinners, or at other —
For Juan stood well both with Ins and Outs,
As in freemasonry a higher brother.
Upon his talent Henry had no doubts;
His manner show'd him sprung from a high mother;
And all men like to show their hospitality
To him whose breeding matches with his quality.

XXV

At Blank-Blank Square; — for we will break no squares
By naming streets: since men are so censorious,
And apt to sow an author's wheat with tares,
Reaping allusions private and inglorious,
Where none were dreamt of, unto love's affairs,
Which were, or are, or are to be notorious,
That therefore do I previously declare,
Lord Henry's mansion was in Blank-Blank Square.

XXVI

Also there bin another pious reason
For making squares and streets anonymous;
Which is, that there is scarce a single season
Which doth not shake some very splendid house
With some slight heart-quake of domestic treason —
A topic scandal doth delight to rouse:
Such I might stumble over unawares,
Unless I knew the very chastest squares.

XXVII

'Tis true, I might have chosen Piccadilly,
A place where peccadillos are unknown;
But I have motives, whether wise or silly,
For letting that pure sanctuary alone.
Therefore I name not square, street, place, until I
Find one where nothing naughty can be shown,
A vestal shrine of innocence of heart:
Such are —— but I have lost the London Chart.

XXVIII

At Henry's mansion then, in Blank-Blank Square,
Was Juan a recherché, welcome guest,
As many other noble scions were;
And some who had but talent for their crest;
Or wealth, which is a passport every where;
Or even mere fashion, which indeed 's the best
Recommendation; and to be well drest
Will very often supersede the rest.

XXIX

And since 'there 's safety in a multitude
Of counsellors,' as Solomon has said,
Or some one for him, in some sage, grave mood; —
Indeed we see the daily proof display'd
In senates, at the bar, in wordy feud,
Where'er collective wisdom can parade,
Which is the only cause that we can guess
Of Britain's present wealth and happiness; —

XXX

But as 'there 's safety' grafted in the number
'Of counsellors' for men, thus for the sex
A large acquaintance lets not Virtue slumber;
Or should it shake, the choice will more perplex —
Variety itself will more encumber.
'Midst many rocks we guard more against wrecks;
And thus with women: howsoe'er it shocks some's
Self-love, there 's safety in a crowd of coxcombs.

XXXI

But Adeline had not the least occasion
For such a shield, which leaves but little merit
To virtue proper, or good education.
Her chief resource was in her own high spirit,
Which judged mankind at their due estimation;
And for coquetry, she disdain'd to wear it:
Secure of admiration, its impression
Was faint, as of an every-day possession.

XXXII

To all she was polite without parade;
To some she show'd attention of that kind
Which flatters, but is flattery convey'd
In such a sort as cannot leave behind
A trace unworthy either wife or maid; —
A gentle, genial courtesy of mind,
To those who were, or pass'd for meritorious,
Just to console sad glory for being glorious;

XXXIII

Which is in all respects, save now and then,
A dull and desolate appendage. Gaze
Upon the shades of those distinguish'd men
Who were or are the puppet-shows of praise,
The praise of persecution; gaze again
On the most favour'd; and amidst the blaze
Of sunset halos o'er the laurel-brow'd,
What can ye recognise? — a gilded cloud.

XXXIV

There also was of course in Adeline
That calm patrician polish in the address,
Which ne'er can pass the equinoctial line
Of any thing which nature would express;
Just as a mandarin finds nothing fine, —
At least his manner suffers not to guess
That any thing he views can greatly please.
Perhaps we have borrow'd this from the Chinese —

XXXV

Perhaps from Horace: his '*Nil admirari*'
Was what he call'd the 'Art of Happiness;'
An art on which the artists greatly vary,
And have not yet attain'd to much success.
However, 't is expedient to be wary:
Indifference certes don't produce distress;
And rash enthusiasm in good society
Were nothing but a moral inebriety.

XXXVI

But Adeline was not indifferent: for
(*Now* for a common-place!) beneath the snow,
As a volcano holds the lava more
Within — *et cætera*. Shall I go on? — No!
I hate to hunt down a tired metaphor,
So let the often-used volcano go.
Poor thing! How frequently, by me and others,
It hath been stirr'd up till its smoke quite smothers!

XXXVII

I 'll have another figure in a trice: —
What say you to a bottle of champagne?
Frozen into a very vinous ice,
Which leaves few drops of that immortal rain,
Yet in the very centre, past all price,
About a liquid glassful will remain;
And this is stronger than the strongest grape
Could e'er express in its expanded shape:

XXXVIII

'T is the whole spirit brought to a quintessence;
And thus the chilliest aspects may concentre
A hidden nectar under a cold presence.
And such are many — though I only meant her

From whom I now deduce these moral lessons,
On which the Muse has always sought to enter.
And your cold people are beyond all price,
When once you have broken their confounded ice.

XXXIX

But after all they are a North-West Passage
Unto the glowing India of the soul;
And as the good ships sent upon that message
Have not exactly ascertain'd the Pole
(Though Parry's efforts look a lucky presage),
Thus gentlemen may run upon a shoal;
For if the Pole 's not open, but all frost
(A chance still), 't is a voyage or vessel lost.

XL

And young beginners may as well commence
With quiet cruising o'er the ocean woman;
While those who are not beginners should have sense
Enough to make for port, ere time shall summon
With his grey signal-flag; and the past tense,
The dreary '*Fuimus*' of all things human,
Must be declined, while life's thin thread 's spun out
Between the gaping heir and gnawing gout.

XLI

But heaven must be diverted; its diversion
Is sometimes truculent — but never mind:
The world upon the whole is worth the assertion
(If but for comfort) that all things are kind:
And that same devilish doctrine of the Persian,
Of the two principles, but leaves behind
As many doubts as any other doctrine
Has ever puzzled Faith withal, or yoked her in.

XLII

The English winter — ending in July,
To recommence in August — now was done.
'T is the postilion's paradise: wheels fly;
On roads, east, south, north, west, there is a run.
But for post-horses who finds sympathy?
Man's pity 's for himself, or for his son,
Always premising that said son at college
Has not contracted much more debt than knowledge.

XLIII

The London winter 's ended in July —
Sometimes a little later. I don't err
In this: whatever other blunders lie
Upon my shoulders, here I must aver
My Muse a glass of weatherology;
For parliament is our barometer:
Let radicals its other acts attack,
Its sessions form our only almanack.

XLIV

When its quicksilver 's down at zero, — lo
Coach, chariot, luggage, baggage, equipage!
Wheels whirl from Carlton palace to Soho,
And happiest they who horses can engage;
The turnpikes glow with dust; and Rotten Row
Sleeps from the chivalry of this bright age;
And tradesmen, with long bills and longer faces,
Sigh — as the postboys fasten on the traces.

XLV

They and their bills, 'Arcadians both,' are left
To the Greek kalends of another session.
Alas! to them of ready cash bereft,
What hope remains? Of *hope* the full possession,
Or generous draft, conceded as a gift,
At a long date — till they can get a fresh one —
Hawk'd about at a discount, small or large;
Also the solace of an overcharge.

XLVI

But these are trifles. Downward flies my lord,
Nodding beside my lady in his carriage.
Away! away! 'Fresh horses!' are the word,
And changed as quickly as hearts after marriage;

The obsequious landlord hath the change restored;
The postboys have no reason to disparage
Their fee; but ere the water'd wheels may hiss hence,
The ostler pleads too for a reminiscence.

XLVII

'T is granted; and the valet mounts the dickey —
That gentleman of lords and gentlemen;
Also my lady's gentlewoman, tricky,
Trick'd out, but modest more than poet's pen
Can paint, — '*Cosi viaggino i Ricchi!*'
(Excuse a foreign slipslop now and then,
If but to show I 've travell'd; and what 's travel,
Unless it teaches one to quote and cavil?)

XLVIII

The London winter and the country summer
Were well nigh over. 'T is perhaps a pity,
When nature wears the gown that doth become her,
To lose those best months in a sweaty city,
And wait until the nightingale grows dumber,
Listening debates not very wise or witty,
Ere patriots their true *country* can remember; —
But there 's no shooting (save grouse) till September.

XLIX

I 've done with my tirade. The world was gone;
The twice two thousand, for whom earth was made,
Were vanish'd to be what they call alone —
That is, with thirty servants for parade,
As many guests, or more; before whom groan
As many covers, duly, daily, laid.
Let none accuse Old England's hospitality —
Its quantity is but condensed to quality.

L

Lord Henry and the Lady Adeline
Departed like the rest of their compeers,
The peerage, to a mansion very fine;
The Gothic Babel of a thousand years.
None than themselves could boast a longer line,
Where time through heroes and through beauties steers;
And oaks as olden as their pedigree
Told of their sires, a tomb in every tree.

LI

A paragraph in every paper told
Of their departure: such is modern fame:
'T is pity that it takes no farther hold
Than an advertisement, or much the same;
When, ere the ink be dry, the sound grows cold.
The Morning Post was foremost to proproclaim —
'Departure, for his country seat, to-day,
Lord H. Amundeville and Lady A.

LII

'We understand the splendid host intends
To entertain, this autumn, a select
And numerous party of his noble friends;
Midst whom we have heard, from sources quite correct,
The Duke of D—— the shooting season spends,
With many more by rank and fashion deck'd;
Also a foreigner of high condition,
The envoy of the secret Russian mission.'

LIII

And thus we see — who doubts the Morning Post?
(Whose articles are like the 'Thirty-nine,'
Which those most swear to who believe them most) —
Our gay Russ Spaniard was ordain'd to shine,
Deck'd by the rays reflected from his host,
With those who, Pope says, 'greatly daring dine.'
'T is odd, but true, — last war the News abounded
More with these dinners than the kill'd or wounded; —

LIV

As thus: 'On Thursday there was a grand dinner;
Present, Lords A. B. C.' — Earls, dukes, by name

Announced with no less pomp than victory's winner:
Then underneath, and in the very same
Column; date, 'Falmouth. There has lately been here
The Slap-dash regiment, so well known to fame,
Whose loss in the late action we regret:
The vacancies are fill'd up — see Gazette.'

LV

To Norman Abbey whirl'd the noble pair, —
An old, old monastery once, and now
Still older mansion; of a rich and rare
Mix'd Gothic, such as artists all allow
Few specimens yet left us can compare
Withal: it lies perhaps a little low,
Because the monks preferr'd a hill behind,
To shelter their devotion from the wind.

LVI

It stood embosom'd in a happy valley,
Crown'd by high woodlands, where the Druid oak
Stood like Caractacus in act to rally
His host, with broad arms 'gainst the thunderstroke;
And from beneath his boughs were seen to sally
The dappled foresters — as day awoke,
The branching stag swept down with all his herd,
To quaff a brook which murmur'd like a bird.

LVII

Before the mansion lay a lucid lake,
Broad as transparent, deep, and freshly fed
By a river, which its soften'd way did take
In currents through the calmer water spread
Around: the wildfowl nestled in the brake
And sedges, brooding in their liquid bed:
The woods sloped downwards to its brink, and stood
With their green faces fix'd upon the flood.

LVIII

Its outlet dash'd into a deep cascade,
Sparkling with foam, until again subsiding,
Its shriller echoes — like an infant made
Quiet — sank into softer ripples, gliding
Into a rivulet; and thus allay'd,
Pursued its course, now gleaming, and now hiding
Its windings through the woods; now clear, now blue,
According as the skies their shadows threw.

LIX

A glorious remnant of the Gothic pile
(While yet the church was Rome's) stood half apart
In a grand arch, which once screen'd many an aisle.
These last had disappear'd — a loss to art:
The first yet frown'd superbly o'er the soil,
And kindled feelings in the roughest heart,
Which mourn'd the power of time's or tempest's march,
In gazing on that venerable arch.

LX

Within a niche, nigh to its pinnacle,
Twelve saints had once stood sanctified in stone;
But these had fallen, not when the friars fell,
But in the war which struck Charles from his throne,
When each house was a fortalice, as tell
The annals of full many a line undone, —
The gallant cavaliers, who fought in vain
For those who knew not to resign or reign.

LXI

But in a higher niche, alone, but crown'd,
The Virgin Mother of the God-born Child,
With her Son in her blessed arms, look'd round,
Spared by some chance when all beside was spoil'd;
She made the earth below seem holy ground.
This may be superstition, weak or wild,
But even the faintest relics of a shrine
Of any worship wake some thoughts divine.

LXII

A mighty window, hollow in the centre,
Shorn of its glass of thousand colourings,
Through which the deepen'd glories once could enter,
Streaming from off the sun like seraph's wings,

Now yawns all desolate: now loud, now fainter,
The gale sweeps through its fretwork, and oft sings
The owl his anthem, where the silenced quire
Lie with their hallelujahs quench'd like fire.

LXIII

But in the noontide of the moon, and when
The wind is wingèd from one point of heaven,
There moans a strange unearthly sound, which then
Is musical — a dying accent driven
Through the huge arch, which soars and sinks again.
Some deem it but the distant echo given
Back to the night wind by the waterfall,
And harmonised by the old choral wall:

LXIV

Others, that some original shape, or form
Shaped by decay perchance, hath given the power
(Though less than that of Memnon's statue, warm
In Egypt's rays, to harp at a fix'd hour)
To this grey ruin, with a voice to charm.
Sad, but serene, it sweeps o'er tree or tower;
The cause I know not, nor can solve; but such
The fact: — I 've heard it — once perhaps too much.

LXV

Amidst the court a Gothic fountain play'd,
Symmetrical, but deck'd with carvings quaint —
Strange faces, like to men in masquerade,
And here perhaps a monster, there a saint:
The spring gush'd through grim mouths of granite made,
And sparkled into basins, where it spent
Its little torrent in a thousand bubbles,
Like man's vain glory, and his vainer troubles.

LXVI

The mansion's self was vast and venerable,
With more of the monastic than has been
Elsewhere preserved: the cloisters still were stable,
The cells, too, and refectory, I ween:
An exquisite small chapel had been able,
Still unimpair'd, to decorate the scene;
The rest had been reform'd, replaced, or sunk,
And spoke more of the baron than the monk.

LXVII

Huge halls, long galleries, spacious chambers, join'd
By no quite lawful marriage of the arts,
Might shock a connoisseur; but when combined,
Form'd a whole which, irregular in parts,
Yet left a grand impression on the mind,
At least of those whose eyes are in their hearts:
We gaze upon a giant for his stature,
Nor judge at first if all be true to nature.

LXVIII

Steel barons, molten the next generation
To silken rows of gay and garter'd earls,
Glanced from the walls in goodly preservation;
And Lady Marys blooming into girls,
With fair long locks, had also kept their station;
And countesses mature in robes and pearls:
Also some beauties of Sir Peter Lely,
Whose drapery hints we may admire them freely.

LXIX

Judges in very formidable ermine
Were there, with brows that did not much invite
The accused to think their lordships would determine
His cause by leaning much from might to right:
Bishops, who had not left a single sermon:
Attorneys-general, awful to the sight,
As hinting more (unless our judgments warp us)
Of the 'Star Chamber' than of 'Habeas Corpus.'

LXX

Generals, some all in armour, of the old
And iron time, ere lead had ta'en the lead;

Others in wigs of Marlborough's martial fold,
Huger than twelve of our degenerate breed:
Lordlings, with staves of white or keys of gold:
Nimrods, whose canvass scarce contain'd the steed;
And here and there some stern high patriot stood,
Who could not get the place for which he sued.

LXXI

But ever and anon, to soothe your vision,
Fatigued with these hereditary glories,
There rose a Carlo Dolce or a Titian,
Or wilder group of savage Salvatore's;
Here danced Albano's boys, and here the sea shone
In Vernet's ocean lights; and there the stories
Of martyrs awed, as Spagnoletto tainted
His brush with all the blood of all the sainted.

LXXII

Here sweetly spread a landscape of Lorraine;
There Rembrandt made his darkness equal light,
Or gloomy Caravaggio's gloomier stain
Bronzed o'er some lean and stoic anchorite:—
But, lo! a Teniers woos, and not in vain,
Your eyes to revel in a livelier sight:
His bell-mouth'd goblet makes me feel quite Danish
Or Dutch with thirst—What, ho! a flask of Rhenish.

LXXIII

O reader! if that thou canst read,—and know,
'T is not enough to spell, or even to read,
To constitute a reader; there must go
Virtues of which both you and I have need;—
Firstly, begin with the beginning (though
That clause is hard); and secondly, proceed;
Thirdly, commence not with the end—or, sinning
In this sort, end at least with the beginning.

LXXIV

But, reader, thou hast patient been of late,
While I, without remorse of rhyme, or fear,
Have built and laid out ground at such a rate,
Dan Phœbus takes me for an auctioneer.
That poets were so from their earliest date,
By Homer's 'Catalogue of ships' is clear;
But a mere modern must be moderate—
I spare you then the furniture and plate.

LXXV

The mellow autumn came, and with it came
The promised party, to enjoy its sweets.
The corn is cut, the manor full of game;
The pointer ranges, and the sportsman beats
In russet jacket:—lynx-like is his aim;
Full grows his bag, and wonder*ful* his feats.
Ah, nut-brown partridges! Ah, brilliant pheasants!
And ah, ye poachers!—'T is no sport for peasants.

LXXVI

An English autumn, though it hath no vines,
Blushing with Bacchant coronals along
The paths, o'er which the far festoon entwines
The red grape in the sunny lands of song,
Hath yet a purchased choice of choicest wines;
The claret light, and the Madeira strong.
If Britain mourn her bleakness, we can tell her,
The very best of vineyards is the cellar.

LXXVII

Then, if she hath not that serene decline
Which makes the southern autumn's day appear
As if 't would to a second spring resign
The season, rather than to winter drear,
Of in-door comforts still she hath a mine,—
The sea-coal fires the 'earliest of the year;'
Without doors, too, she may compete in mellow,
As what is lost in green is gain'd in yellow.

LXXVIII

And for the effeminate *villeggiatura* —
Rife with more horns than hounds — she hath the chase,
So animated that it might allure a
Saint from his beads to join the jocund race;
Even Nimrod's self might leave the plains of Dura,
And wear the Melton jacket for a space:
If she hath no wild boars, she hath a tame
Preserve of bores, who ought to be made game.

LXXIX

The noble guests, assembled at the Abbey,
Consisted of — we give the sex the pas —
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke; the Countess Crabby;
The Ladies Scilly, Busey; — Miss Eclat,
Miss Bombazeen, Miss Mackstay, Miss O'Tabby,
And Mrs. Rabbi, the rich banker's squaw;
Also the honourable Mrs. Sleep,
Who look'd a white lamb, yet was a black sheep:

LXXX

With other Countesses of Blank — but rank;
At once the 'lie' and the 'élite' of crowds;
Who pass like water filter'd in a tank,
All purged and pious from their native clouds;
Or paper turn'd to money by the Bank:
No matter how or why, the passport shrouds
The 'passée' and the past; for good society
Is no less famed for tolerance than piety, —

LXXXI

That is, up to a certain point; which point
Forms the most difficult in punctuation.
Appearances appear to form the joint
On which it hinges in a higher station;
And so that no explosion cry 'Aroint
Thee, witch!' or each Medea has her Jason;
Or (to the point with Horace and with Pulci)
'*Omne tulit punctum*, quæ *miscuit utile dulci*.'

LXXXII

I can't exactly trace their rule of right,
Which hath a little leaning to a lottery.
I 've seen a virtuous woman put down quite
By the mere combination of a coterie;
Also a so-so matron boldly fight
Her way back to the world by dint of plottery,
And shine the very *Siria* of the spheres,
Escaping with a few slight, scarless sneers.

LXXXIII

I have seen more than I 'll say: — but we will see
How our *villeggiatura* will get on.
The party might consist of thirty-three
Of highest caste — the Brahmins of the ton.
I have named a few, not foremost in degree,
But ta'en at hazard as the rhyme may run.
By way of sprinkling, scatter'd amongst these,
There also were some Irish absentees.

LXXXIV

There was Parolles, too, the legal bully,
Who limits all his battles to the bar
And senate: when invited elsewhere, truly,
He shows more appetite for words than war.
There was the young bard Rackrhyme, who had newly
Come out and glimmer'd as a six weeks' star.
There was Lord Pyrrho, too, the great free-thinker;
And Sir John Pottledeep, the mighty drinker.

LXXXV

There was the Duke of Dash, who was a — duke,
'Ay, every inch a' duke; there were twelve peers
Like Charlemagne's — and all such peers in look
And intellect, that neither eyes nor ears
For commoners had ever them mistook.
There were the six Miss Rawbolds — pretty dears!
All song and sentiment; whose hearts were set
Less on a convent than a coronet.

LXXXVI

There were four Honourable Misters, whose
Honour was more before their names than after;
There was the preux Chevalier de la Ruse,
Whom France and Fortune lately deign'd to waft here,
Whose chiefly harmless talent was to amuse;
But the clubs found it rather serious laughter,
Because — such was his magic power to please —
The dice seem'd charm'd, too, with his repartees.

LXXXVII

There was Dick Dubious, the metaphysician,
Who loved philosophy and a good dinner;
Angle, the soi-disant mathematician;
Sir Henry Silvercup, the great race-winner.
There was the Reverend Rodomont Precisian,
Who did not hate so much the sin as sinner;
And Lord Augustus Fitz-Planfagenet,
Good at all things, but better at a bet.

LXXXVIII

There was Jack Jargon, the gigantic guardsman;
And General Fireface, famous in the field,
A great tactician, and no less a swordsman,
Who ate, last war, more Yankees than he kill'd.
There was the waggish Welsh Judge, Jefferies Hardsman,
In his grave office so completely skill'd,
That when a culprit came for condemnation,
He had his judge's joke for consolation.

LXXXIX

Good company 's a chess-board — there are kings,
Queens, bishops, knights, rooks, pawns; the world 's a game;
Save that the puppets pull at their own strings,
Methinks gay Punch hath something of the same.
My Muse, the butterfly hath but her wings,
Not stings, and flits through ether without aim.
Alighting rarely: — were she but a hornet,
Perhaps there might be vices which would mourn it.

XC

I had forgotten — but must not forget —
An orator, the latest of the session,
Who had deliver'd well a very set
Smooth speech, his first and maidenly trangression
Upon debate: the papers echoed yet
With his début, which made a strong impression,
And rank'd with what is every day display'd —
'The best first speech that ever yet was made.'

XCI

Proud of his 'Hear hims!' proud, too, of his vote
And lost virginity of oratory,
Proud of his learning (just enough to quote),
He revell'd in his Ciceronian glory:
With memory excellent to get by rote,
With wit to hatch a pun or tell a story,
Graced with some merit, and with more effrontery,
'His country's pride,' he came down to the country.

XCII

There also were two wits by acclamation,
Longbow from Ireland, Strongbow from the Tweed,
Both lawyers and both men of education;
But Strongbow's wit was of more polish'd breed:
Longbow was rich in an imagination
As beautiful and bounding as a steed,
But sometimes stumbling over a potato, —
While Strongbow's best things might have come from Cato.

XCIII

Strongbow was like a new-tuned harpsichord;
But Longbow wild as an Æolian harp,
With which the winds of heaven can claim accord,
And make a music, whether flat or sharp.

Of Strongbow's talk you would not change a word:
At Longbow's phrases you might sometimes carp:
Both wits — one born so, and the other bred —
This by his heart, his rival by his head.

XCIV

If all these seem a heterogeneous mass
To be assembled at a country seat,
Yet think, a specimen of every class
Is better than a humdrum tête-à-tête.
The days of Comedy are gone, alas!
When Congreve's fool could vie with Molière's *bête:*
Society is smooth'd to that excess,
That manners hardly differ more than dress.

XCV

Our ridicules are kept in the back-ground —
Ridiculous enough, but also dull;
Professions, too, are no more to be found
Professional; and there is nought to cull
Of folly's fruit; for though your fools abound,
They 're barren, and not worth the pains to pull.
Society is now one polish'd horde,
Form'd of two mighty tribes, the *Bores* and *Bored.*

XCVI

But from being farmers, we turn gleaners, gleaning
The scanty but right-well thresh'd ears of truth;
And, gentle reader! when you gather meaning,
You may be Boaz, and I — modest Ruth.
Farther I 'd quote, but Scripture intervening
Forbids. A great impression in my youth
Was made by Mrs. Adams, where she cries,
'That Scriptures out of church are blasphemies.'

XCVII

But what we can we glean in this vile age
Of chaff, although our gleanings be not grist.
I must not quite omit the talking sage,
Kit-Cat, the famous Conversationist,
Who, in his common-place book, had a page
Prepared each morn for evenings. 'List, oh, list!' —
'Alas, poor ghost!' — What unexpected woes
Await those who have studied their bon-mots!

XCVIII

Firstly, they must allure the conversation
By many windings to their clever clinch;
And secondly, must let slip no occasion,
Nor *bate* (abate) their hearers of an *inch,*
But take an ell — and make a great sensation,
If possible; and thirdly, never flinch
When some smart talker puts them to the test,
But seize the last word, which no doubt 's the best.

XCIX

Lord Henry and his lady were the hosts;
The party we have touch'd on were the guests:
Their table was a board to tempt even ghosts
To pass the Styx for more substantial feasts.
I will not dwell upon ragoûts or roasts,
Albeit all human history attests
That happiness for man — the hungry sinner! —
Since Eve ate apples, much depends on dinner.

C

Witness the lands which 'flow'd with milk and honey,'
Held out unto the hungry Israelites;
To this we have added since, the love of money,
The only sort of pleasure which requites.
Youth fades, and leaves our days no longer sunny;
We tire of mistresses and parasites;
But oh, ambrosial cash! Ah! who would lose thee?
When we no more can use, or even abuse thee!

CI

The gentlemen got up betimes to shoot,
Or hunt: the young, because they liked the sport —
The first thing boys like after play and fruit;

The middle-aged to make the day more short;
For *ennui* is a growth of English root,
Though nameless in our language: — we retort
The fact for words, and let the French translate
That awful yawn which sleep can not abate.

CII

The elderly walk'd through the library,
And tumbled books, or criticised the pictures,
Or saunter'd through the gardens piteously,
And made upon the hot-house several strictures,
Or rode a nag which trotted not too high,
Or on the morning papers read their lectures,
Or on the watch their longing eyes would fix,
Longing at sixty for the hour of six.

CIII

But none were 'gêné:' the great hour of union
Was rung by dinner's knell; till then all were
Masters of their own time — or in communion,
Or solitary, as they chose to bear
The hours, which how to pass is but to few known.
Each rose up at his own, and had to spare
What time he chose for dress, and broke his fast
When, where, and how he chose for that repast.

CIV

The ladies — some rouged, some a little pale —
Met the morn as they might. If fine, they rode,
Or walk'd; if foul, they read, or told a tale,
Sung, or rehearsed the last dance from abroad;
Discuss'd the fashion which might next prevail,
And settled bonnets by the newest code,
Or cramm'd twelve sheets into one little letter,
To make each correspondent a new debtor.

CV

For some had absent lovers, all had friends.
The earth has nothing like a she epistle,
And hardly heaven — because it never ends.
I love the mystery of a female missal,
Which, like a creed, ne'er says all it intends,
But full of cunning as Ulysses' whistle,
When he allured poor Dolon: — you had better
Take care what you reply to such a letter.

CVI

Then there were billiards; cards, too, but *no* dice; —
Save in the clubs no man of honour plays; —
Boats when 't was water, skating when 't was ice,
And the hard frost destroy'd the scenting days:
And angling, too, that solitary vice,
Whatever Izaak Walton sings or says;
The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet
Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.

CVII

With evening came the banquet and the wine;
The conversazione; the duet,
Attuned by voices more or less divine
(My heart or head aches with the memory yet).
The four Miss Rawbolds in a glee would shine;
But the two youngest loved more to be set
Down to the harp — because to music's charms
They added graceful necks, white hands and arms.

CVIII

Sometimes a dance (though rarely on field days,
For then the gentlemen were rather tired)
Display'd some sylph-like figures in its maze;
Then there was small-talk ready when required;
Flirtation — but decorous; the mere praise
Of charms that should or should not be admired.

The hunters fought their fox-hunt o'er again,
And then retreated soberly — at ten.

CIX

The politicians, in a nook apart,
Discuss'd the world, and settled all the spheres;
The wits watch'd every loophole for their art,
To introduce a bon-mot head and ears;
Small is the rest of those who would be smart,
A moment's good thing may have cost them years
Before they find an hour to introduce it;
And then, even *then*, some bore may make them lose it.

CX

But all was gentle and aristocratic
In this our party; polish'd, smooth, and cold,
As Phidian forms cut out of marble Attic.
There now are no Squire Westerns as of old;
And our Sophias are not so emphatic,
But fair as then, or fairer to behold.
We have no accomplish'd blackguards, like Tom Jones,
But gentlemen in stays, as stiff as stones.

CXI

They separated at an early hour;
That is, ere midnight — which is London's noon:
But in the country ladies seek their bower
A little earlier than the waning moon.
Peace to the slumbers of each folded flower —
May the rose call back its true colour soon!
Good hours of fair cheeks are the fairest tinters,
And lower the price of rouge — at least some winters.

CANTO THE FOURTEENTH

I

If from great nature's or our own abyss
Of thought we could but snatch a certainty,
Perhaps mankind might find the path they miss —
But then 't would spoil much good philosophy.
One system eats another up, and this
Much as old Saturn ate his progeny;
For when his pious consort gave him stones
In lieu of sons, of these he made no bones.

II

But System doth reverse the Titan's breakfast,
And eats her parents, albeit the digestion
Is difficult. Pray tell me, can you make fast,
After due search, your faith to any question?
Look back o'er ages, ere unto the stake fast
You bind yourself, and call some mode the best one.
Nothing more true than *not* to trust your senses;
And yet what are your other evidences?

III

For me, I know nought; nothing I deny,
Admit, reject, contemn; and what know *you*,
Except perhaps that you were born to die?
And both may after all turn out untrue.
An age may come, Font of Eternity,
When nothing shall be either old or new.
Death, so call'd, is a thing which makes men weep,
And yet a third of life is pass'd in sleep.

IV

A sleep without dreams, after a rough day
Of toil, is what we covet most; and yet
How clay shrinks back from more quiescent clay!
The very Suicide that pays his debt
At once without instalments (an old way
Of paying debts, which creditors regret)
Lets out impatiently his rushing breath,
Less from disgust of life than dread of death.

V

'T is round him, near him, here, there, every where;
And there 's a courage which grows out of fear,

Perhaps of all most desperate, which will dare
The worst to *know* it: — when the mountains rear
Their peaks beneath your human foot, and there
You look down o'er the precipice, and drear
The gulf of rock yawns, — you can't gaze a minute
Without an awful wish to plunge within it.

VI

'T is true, you don't — but, pale and struck with terror,
Retire: but look into your past impression!
And you will find, though shuddering at the mirror
Of your own thoughts, in all their self-confession,
The lurking bias, be it truth or error,
To the *unknown*; a secret prepossession,
To plunge with all your fears — but where? You know not,
And that 's the reason why you do — or do not.

VII

But what 's this to the purpose? you will say.
Gent. reader, nothing; a mere speculation,
For which my sole excuse is — 't is my way;
Sometimes *with* and sometimes without occasion
I write what 's uppermost, without delay:
This narrative is not meant for narration,
But a mere airy and fantastic basis,
To build up common things with common places.

VIII

You know, or don't know, that great Bacon saith,
'Fling up a straw, 't will show the way the wind blows;'
And such a straw, borne on by human breath,
Is poesy, according as the mind glows;
A paper kite which flies 'twixt life and death,
A shadow which the onward soul behind throws:
And mine 's a bubble, not blown up for praise,
But just to play with, as an infant plays.

IX

The world is all before me — or behind;
For I have seen a portion of that same,
And quite enough for me to keep in mind; —
Of passions, too, I have proved enough to blame,
To the great pleasure of our friends, mankind,
Who like to mix some slight alloy with fame;
For I was rather famous in my time,
Until I fairly knock'd it up with rhyme.

X

I have brought this world about my ears, and eke
The other; that 's to say, the clergy, who
Upon my head have bid their thunders break
In pious libels by no means a few.
And yet I can't help scribbling once a week,
Tiring old readers, nor discovering new.
In youth I wrote because my mind was full,
And now because I feel it growing dull.

XI

But 'why then publish?' — There are no rewards
Of fame or profit when the world grows weary.
I ask in turn, — Why do you play at cards?
Why drink? Why read? — To make some hour less dreary.
It occupies me to turn back regards
On what I 've seen or ponder'd, sad or cheery;
And what I write I cast upon the stream,
To swim or sink — I have had at least my dream.

XII

I think that were I *certain* of success,
I hardly could compose another line:
So long I 've battled either more or less,
That no defeat can drive me from the Nine.
This feeling 't is not easy to express,
And yet 't is not affected, I opine.

In play, there are two pleasures for your choosing —
The one is winning, and the other losing.

XIII

Besides, my Muse by no means deals in fiction:
She gathers a repertory of facts,
Of course with some reserve and slight restriction,
But mostly sings of human things and acts —
And that 's one cause she meets with contradiction;
For too much truth, at first sight, ne'er attracts;
And were her object only what 's call'd glory,
With more ease too she 'd tell a different story.

XIV

Love, war, a tempest — surely there 's variety;
Also a seasoning slight of lucubration;
A bird's-eye view, too, of that wild, Society;
A slight glance thrown on men of every station.
If you have nought else, here 's at least satiety
Both in performance and in preparation;
And though these lines should only line portmanteaus,
Trade will be all the better for these Cantos.

XV

The portion of this world which I at present
Have taken up to fill the following sermon,
Is one of which there 's no description recent.
The reason why is easy to determine:
Although it seems both prominent and pleasant,
There is a sameness in its gems and ermine,
A dull and family likeness through all ages,
Of no great promise for poetic pages.

XVI

With much to excite, there 's little to exalt;
Nothing that speaks to all men and all times;
A sort of varnish over every fault;
A kind of common-place, even in their crimes;
Factitious passions, wit without much salt,
A want of that true nature which sublimes
Whate'er it shows with truth; a smooth monotony
Of character, in those at least who have got any.

XVII

Sometimes, indeed, like soldiers off parade,
They break their ranks and gladly leave the drill;
But then the roll-call draws them back afraid,
And they must be or seem what they were: still
Doubtless it is a brilliant masquerade;
But when of the first sight you have had your fill,
It palls — at least it did so upon me,
This paradise of pleasure and ennui.

XVIII

When we have made our love, and gamed our gaming,
Drest, voted, shone, and, may be, something more;
With dandies dined; heard senators declaiming;
Seen beauties brought to market by the score,
Sad rakes to sadder husbands chastely taming;
There 's little left but to be bored or bore.
Witness those '*ci-devant jeunes hommes*' who stem
The stream, nor leave the world which leaveth them.

XIX

'T is said — indeed a general complaint —
That no one has succeeded in describing
The monde, exactly as they ought to paint:
Some say, that authors only snatch, by bribing
The porter, some slight scandals strange and quaint,
To furnish matter for their moral gibing;
And that their books have but one style in common —
My lady's prattle, filter'd through her woman.

XX

But this can't well be true, just now; for writers
Are grown of the beau monde a part potential:
I 've seen them balance even the scale with fighters,
Especially when young, for that 's essential.
Why do their sketches fail them as inditers
Of what they deem themselves most consequential,
The *real* portrait of the highest tribe?
'T is that, in fact, there 's little to describe.

XXI

'*Haud ignara loquor;*' these are *Nugæ*, '*quarum*
Pars parva *fui*,' but still art and part.
Now I could much more easily sketch a harem,
A battle, wreck, or history of the heart,
Than these things; and besides, I wish to spare 'em,
For reasons which I choose to keep apart.
'*Vetabo Cereris sacrum qui vulgarit*' —
Which means that vulgar people must not share it.

XXII

And therefore what I throw off is ideal —
Lower'd, leaven'd, like a history of freemasons;
Which bears the same relation to the real,
As Captain Parry's voyage may do to Jason's.
The grand arcanum 's not for men to see all;
My music has some mystic diapasons;
And there is much which could not be appreciated
In any manner by the uninitiated.

XXIII

Alas! worlds fall — and woman, since she fell'd
The world (as, since that history less polite
Than true, hath been a creed so strictly held)
Has not yet given up the practice quite.
Poor thing of usages! coerced, compell'd,
Victim when wrong, and martyr oft when right,
Condemn'd to child-bed, as men for their sins
Have shaving too entail'd upon their chins, —

XXIV

A daily plague, which in the aggregate
May average on the whole with parturition.
But as to women, who can penetrate
The real sufferings of their she condition?
Man's very sympathy with their estate
Has much of selfishness, and more suspicion.
Their love, their virtue, beauty, education,
But form good housekeepers, to breed a nation.

XXV

All this were very well, and can't be better;
But even this is difficult, Heaven knows,
So many troubles from her birth beset her,
Such small distinction between friends and foes,
The gilding wears so soon from off her fetter,
That — but ask any woman if she 'd choose
(Take her at thirty, that is) to have been
Female or male? a schoolboy or a queen?

XXVI

'Petticoat influence' is a great reproach,
Which even those who obey would fain be thought
To fly from, as from hungry pikes a roach;
But since beneath it upon earth we are brought,
By various joltings of life's hackney coach,
I for one venerate a petticoat —
A garment of a mystical sublimity,
No matter whether russet, silk, or dimity.

XXVII

Much I respect, and much I have adored,
In my young days, that chaste and goodly veil,
Which holds a treasure, like a miser's hoard,
And more attracts by all it doth conceal —
A golden scabbard on a Damasque sword,
A loving letter with a mystic seal,

A cure for grief — for what can ever rankle
Before a petticoat and peeping ankle?

XXVIII

And when upon a silent, sullen day,
With a sirocco, for example, blowing,
When even the sea looks dim with all its spray,
And sulkily the river's ripple 's flowing,
And the sky shows that very ancient gray,
The sober, sad antithesis to glowing, —
'T is pleasant, if *then* any thing is pleasant,
To catch a glimpse even of a pretty peasant.

XXIX

We left our heroes and our heroines
In that fair clime which don't depend on climate,
Quite independent of the Zodiac's signs,
Though certainly more difficult to rhyme at,
Because the sun, and stars, and aught that shines,
Mountains, and all we can be most sublime at,
Are there oft dull and dreary as a *dun* —
Whether a sky's or tradesman's is all one.

XXX

An in-door life is less poetical;
And out of door hath showers, and mists, and sleet,
With which I could not brew a pastoral.
But be it as it may, a bard must meet
All difficulties, whether great or small,
To spoil his undertaking or complete,
And work away like spirit upon matter,
Embarrass'd somewhat both with fire and water.

XXXI

Juan — in this respect, at least, like saints —
Was all things unto people of all sorts,
And lived contentedly, without complaints,
In camps, in ships, in cottages, or courts —
Born with that happy soul which seldom faints,
And mingling modestly in toils or sports.
He likewise could be most things to all women,
Without the coxcombry of certain *she* men.

XXXII

A fox-hunt to a foreigner is strange;
'T is also subject to the double danger
Of tumbling first, and having in exchange
Some pleasant jesting at the awkward stranger:
But Juan had been early taught to range
The wilds, as doth an Arab turn'd avenger,
So that his horse, or charger, hunter, hack,
Knew that he had a rider on his back.

XXXIII

And now in this new field, with some applause,
He clear'd hedge, ditch, and double post, and rail,
And never *craned*, and made but few '*faux pas*,'
And only fretted when the scent 'gan fail.
He broke, 't is true, some statutes of the laws
Of hunting — for the sagest youth is frail;
Rode o'er the hounds, it may be, now and then,
And once o'er several country gentlemen.

XXXIV

But on the whole, to general admiration
He acquitted both himself and horse: the squires
Marvell'd at merit of another nation;
The boors cried 'Dang it! who 'd have thought it?'— Sires,
The Nestors of the sporting generation,
Swore praises, and recall'd their former fires;
The huntsman's self relented to a grin,
And rated him almost a whipper-in.

XXXV

Such were his trophies — not of spear and shield,
But leaps, and bursts, and sometimes foxes' brushes;
Yet I must own, — although in this I yield
To patriot sympathy a Briton's blushes,—
He thought at heart like courtly Chesterfield,
Who, after a long chase o'er hills, dales, bushes,
And what not, though he rode beyond all price,
Ask'd next day, 'If men ever hunted *twice*?'

XXXVI

He also had a quality uncommon
To early risers after a long chase,
Who wake in winter ere the cock can summon
December's drowsy day to his dull race,—
A quality agreeable to woman,
When her soft, liquid words run on apace,
Who likes a listener, whether saint or sinner,—
He did not fall asleep just after dinner;

XXXVII

But, light and airy, stood on the alert,
And shone in the best part of dialogue,
By humouring always what they might assert,
And listening to the topics most in vogue;
Now grave, now gay, but never dull or pert;
And smiling but in secret—cunning rogue!
He ne'er presumed to make an error clearer;—
In short, there never was a better hearer.

XXXVIII

And then he danced;—all foreigners excel
The serious Angles in the eloquence
Of pantomime;—he danced, I say, right well,
With emphasis, and also with good sense—
A thing in footing indispensable;
He danced without theatrical pretence,
Not like a ballet-master in the van
Of his drill'd nymphs, but like a gentleman.

XXXIX

Chaste were his steps, each kept within due bound,
And elegance was sprinkled o'er his figure;
Like swift Camilla, he scarce skimm'd the ground,
And rather held in than put forth his vigour;
And then he had an ear for music's sound,
Which might defy a crotchet critic's rigour.
Such classic pas—sans flaws—set off our hero,
He glanced like a personified Bolero;

XL

Or, like a flying Hour before Aurora,
In Guido's famous fresco which alone
Is worth a tour to Rome, although no more a
Remnant were there of the old world's sole throne.
The '*tout ensemble*' of his movements wore a
Grace of the soft ideal, seldom shown,
And ne'er to be described; for to the dolour
Of bards and prosers, words are void of colour.

XLI

No marvel then he was a favourite;
A full-grown Cupid, very much admired;
A little spoilt, but by no means so quite;
At least he kept his vanity retired.
Such was his tact, he could alike delight
The chaste, and those who are not so much inspired.
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke, who loved '*tracasserie*,'
Began to treat him with some small '*agacerie*.'

XLII

She was a fine and somewhat full-blown blonde,
Desirable, distinguish'd, celebrated
For several winters in the grand, *grand monde*.
I 'd rather not say what might be related
Of her exploits, for this were ticklish ground;
Besides there might be falsehood in what 's stated:
Her late performance had been a dead set
At Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

XLIII

This noble personage began to look
A little black upon this new flirtation;
But such small licences must lovers brook,
Mere freedoms of the female corporation.
Woe to the man who ventures a rebuke!
'T will but precipitate a situation
Extremely disagreeable, but common
To calculators when they count on woman.

XLIV

The circle smiled, then whisper'd, and then sneer'd;
The Misses bridled, and the matrons frown'd;
Some hoped things might not turn out as they fear'd;
Some would not deem such women could be found;
Some ne'er believed one half of what they heard;
Some look'd perplex'd, and others look'd profound;
And several pitied with sincere regret
Poor Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

XLV

But what is odd, none ever named the duke,
Who, one might think, was something in the affair:
True, he was absent, and, 't was rumour'd, took
But small concern about the when, or where,
Or what his consort did: if he could brook
Her gaieties, none had a right to stare:
Theirs was that best of unions, past all doubt,
Which never meets, and therefore can't fall out.

XLVI

But, oh! that I should ever pen so sad a line!
Fired with an abstract love of virtue, she,
My Dian of the Ephesians, Lady Adeline,
Began to think the duchess' conduct free;
Regretting much that she had chosen so bad a line,
And waxing chiller in her courtesy,
Look'd grave and pale to see her friend's fragility,
For which most friends reserve their sensibility.

XLVII

There 's nought in this bad world like sympathy:
'T is so becoming to the soul and face,
Sets to soft music the harmonious sigh,
And robes sweet friendship in a Brussels lace.
Without a friend, what were humanity,
To hunt our errors up with a good grace?
Consoling us with—'Would you had thought twice!
Ah, if you had but follow'd my advice!'

XLVIII

O Job! you had two friends: one 's quite enough,
Especially when we are ill at ease;
They are but bad pilots when the weather 's rough,
Doctors less famous for their cures than fees.
Let no man grumble when his friends fall off,
As they will do like leaves at the first breeze:
When your affairs come round, one way or t' other,
Go to the coffee-house, and take another.

XLIX

But this is not my maxim: had it been,
Some heart-aches had been spared me: yet I care not—
I would not be a tortoise in his screen
Of stubborn shell, which waves and weather wear not.
'T is better on the whole to have felt and seen
That which humanity may bear, or bear not:
'T will teach discernment to the sensitive,
And not to pour their ocean in a sieve.

L

Of all the horrid, hideous notes of woe,
Sadder than owl-songs or the midnigh blast,
Is that portentous phrase, 'I told you so,'
Utter'd by friends, those prophets of the past,
Who, 'stead of saying what you now should do,
Own they foresaw that you would fall at last,
And solace your slight lapse 'gainst '*bonos mores*,'
With a long memorandum of old stories.

LI

The Lady Adeline's serene severity
Was not confined to feeling for her friend,

Whose fame she rather doubted with posterity,
Unless her habits should begin to mend:
But Juan also shared in her austerity,
But mix'd with pity, pure as e'er was penn'd:
His inexperience moved her gentle ruth,
And (as her junior by six weeks) his youth.

LII

These forty days' advantage of her years —
And hers were those which can face calculation,
Boldly referring to the list of peers
And noble births, nor dread the enumeration —
Gave her a right to have maternal fears
For a young gentleman's fit education,
Though she was far from that leap year, whose leap,
In female dates, strikes Time all of a heap.

LIII

This may be fix'd at somewhere before thirty —
Say seven-and-twenty; for I never knew
The strictest in chronology and virtue
Advance beyond, while they could pass for new.
O Time! why dost not pause? Thy scythe, so dirty
With rust, should surely cease to hack and hew.
Reset it; shave more smoothly, also slower,
If but to keep thy credit as a mower.

LIV

But Adeline was far from that ripe age,
Whose ripeness is but bitter at the best:
'T was rather her experience made her sage,
For she had seen the world and stood its test,
As I have said in — I forget what page;
My Muse despises reference, as you have guess'd
By this time; — but strike six from seven-and-twenty,
And you will find her sum of years in plenty.

LV

At sixteen she came out; presented, vaunted,
She put all coronets into commotion:
At seventeen, too, the world was still enchanted
With the new Venus of their brilliant ocean:
At eighteen, though below her feet still panted
A hecatomb of suitors with devotion,
She had consented to create again
That Adam, call'd 'The happiest of men.'

LVI

Since then she had sparkled through three glowing winters,
Admired, adored; but also so correct,
That she had puzzled all the acutest hinters,
Without the apparel of being circumspect:
They could not even glean the slightest splinters
From off the marble, which had no defect.
She had also snatch'd a moment since her marriage
To bear a son and heir — and one miscarriage.

LVII

Fondly the wheeling fire-flies flew around her,
Those little glitterers of the London night;
But none of these possess'd a sting to wound her —
She was a pitch beyond a coxcomb's flight.
Perhaps she wish'd an aspirant profounder;
But whatsoe'er she wish'd, she acted right;
And whether coldness, pride, or virtue dignify
A woman, so she's good, what does it signify?

LVIII

I hate a motive, like a lingering bottle
Which with the landlord makes too long a stand,
Leaving all-claretless the unmoisten'd throttle,
Especially with politics on hand;
I hate it, as I hate a drove of cattle,
Who whirl the dust as simooms whirl the sand;
I hate it, as I hate an argument,
A laureate's ode, or servile peer's 'content.'

LIX

'T is sad to hack into the roots of things,
They are so much intertwisted with the earth;
So that the branch a goodly verdure flings,
I reck not if an acorn gave it birth.
To trace all actions to their secret springs
Would make indeed some melancholy mirth;
But this is not at present my concern,
And I refer you to wise Oxenstiern.

LX

With the kind view of saving an éclat,
Both to the duchess and diplomatist,
The Lady Adeline, as soon 's she saw
That Juan was unlikely to resist
(For foreigners don't know that a *faux pas*
In England ranks quite on a different list
From those of other lands unblest with juries,
Whose verdict for such sin a certain cure is); —

LXI

The Lady Adeline resolved to take
Such measures as she thought might best impede
The farther progress of this sad mistake.
She thought with some simplicity indeed;
But innocence is bold even at the stake,
And simple in the world, and doth not need
Nor use those palisades by dames erected,
Whose virtue lies in never being detected.

LXII

It was not that she fear'd the very worst:
His Grace was an enduring, married man,
And was not likely all at once to burst
Into a scene, and swell the clients' clan
Of Doctors' Commons: but she dreaded first
The magic of her Grace's talisman,
And next a quarrel (as he seem'd to fret)
With Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

LXIII

Her Grace, too, pass'd for being an intrigante,
And somewhat *méchante* in her amorous sphere;
One of those pretty, precious plagues, which haunt
A lover with caprices soft and dear,
That like to *make* a quarrel, when they can't
Find one, each day of the delightful year;
Bewitching, torturing, as they freeze or glow,
And — what is worst of all — won't let you go:

LXIV

The sort of thing to turn a young man's head,
Or make a Werter of him in the end.
No wonder then a purer soul should dread
This sort of chaste *liaison* for a friend;
It were much better to be wed or dead,
Than wear a heart a woman loves to rend.
'T is best to pause, and think, ere you rush on,
If that a '*bonne fortune*' be really '*bonne*.'

LXV

And first, in the o'erflowing of her heart,
Which really knew or thought it knew no guile,
She call'd her husband now and then apart,
And bade him counsel Juan. With a smile
Lord Henry heard her plans of artless art
To wean Don Juan from the siren's wile;
And answer'd, like a statesman or a prophet,
In such guise that she could make nothing of it.

LXVI

Firstly, he said, 'he never interfered
In any body's business but the king's:'
Next, that 'he never judged from what appear'd,
Without strong reason, of those sort of things:'
Thirdly, that 'Juan had more brain than beard,
And was not to be held in leading strings;'
And fourthly, what need hardly be said twice,
'That good but rarely came from good advice.'

LXVII

And, therefore, doubtless to approve the truth
Of the last axiom, he advised his spouse

To leave the parties to themselves, forsooth —
At least as far as *bienséance* allows:
That time would temper Juan's faults of youth;
That young men rarely made monastic vows;
That opposition only more attaches —
But here a messenger brought in despatches:

LXVIII

And being of the council call'd 'the Privy,'
Lord Henry walk'd into his cabinet,
To furnish matter for some future Livy
To tell how he reduced the nation's debt;
And if their full contents I do not give ye,
It is because I do not know them yet;
But I shall add them in a brief appendix,
To come between mine epic and its index.

LXIX

But ere he went, he added a slight hint,
Another gentle common-place or two,
Such as are coin'd in conversation's mint,
And pass, for want of better, though not new:
Then broke his packet, to see what was in 't,
And having casually glanced it through,
Retired; and, as went out, calmly kiss'd her,
Less like a young wife than an aged sister.

LXX

He was a cold, good, honourable man,
Proud of his birth, and proud of every thing;
A goodly spirit for a state divan,
A figure fit to walk before a king;
Tall, stately, form'd to lead the courtly van
On birthdays, glorious with a star and string;
The very model of a chamberlain —
And such I mean to make him when I reign.

LXXI

But there was something wanting on the whole —
I don't know what, and therefore cannot tell —
Which pretty women — the sweet souls! — call *soul*.
Certes it was not body; he was well
Proportion'd, as a poplar or a pole,
A handsome man, that human miracle;
And in each circumstance of love or war
Had still preserved his perpendicular.

LXXII

Still there was something wanting, as I 've said —
That undefinable '*Je ne sçais quoi*,'
Which, for what I know, may of yore have led
To Homer's Iliad, since it drew to Troy
The Greek Eve, Helen, from the Spartan's bed;
Though on the whole, no doubt, the Dardan boy
Was much inferior to King Menelaüs: —
But thus it is some women will betray us.

LXXIII

There is an awkward thing which much perplexes,
Unless like wise Tiresias we had proved
By turns the difference of the several sexes;
Neither can show quite *how* they would be loved.
The sensual for a short time but connects us,
The sentimental boasts to be unmoved;
But both together form a kind of centaur,
Upon whose back 't is better not to venture.

LXXIV

A something all-sufficient for the *heart*
Is that for which the sex are always seeking:
But how to fill up that same vacant part?
There lies the rub — and this they are but weak in.
Frail mariners afloat without a chart,
They run before the wind through high seas breaking;
And when they have made the shore through every shock,
'T is odd, or odds, it may turn out a rock.

LXXV

There is a flower call'd 'Love in Idleness,'
For which see Shakspeare's ever blooming garden; —
I will not make his great description less,
And beg his British godship's humble pardon,
If in my extremity of rhyme's distress,
I touch a single leaf where he is warden: —

But though the flower is different, with the French
Or Swiss Rousseau, cry '*Voilà la Pervenche!*'

LXXVI

Eureka! I have found it! What I mean
To say is, not that love is idleness,
But that in love such idleness has been
An accessory, as I have cause to guess.
Hard labour 's an indifferent go-between;
Your men of business are not apt to express
Much passion, since the merchant-ship, the Argo,
Convey'd Medea as her supercargo.

LXXVII

'*Beatus ille procul!*' from '*negotiis*,'
Saith Horace; the great little poet 's wrong;
His other maxim, '*Noscitur à sociis*,'
Is much more to the purpose of his song;
Though even that were sometimes too ferocious,
Unless good company be kept too long;
But, in his teeth, whate'er their state or station,
Thrice happy they who *have* an occupation!

LXXVIII

Adam exchanged his Paradise for ploughing,
Eve made up millinery with fig leaves —
The earliest knowledge from the tree so knowing,
As far as I know, that the church receives:
And since that time it need not cost much showing,
That many of the ills o'er which man grieves,
And still more women, spring from not employing
Some hours to make the remnant worth enjoying.

LXXIX

And hence high life is oft a dreary void,
A rack of pleasures, where we must invent
A something wherewithal to be annoy'd.
Bards may sing what they please about *Content*:
Contented, when translated, means but cloy'd;
And hence arise the woes of sentiment,
Blue devils, and blue-stockings, and romances
Reduced to practice, and perform'd like dances.

LXXX

I do declare, upon an affidavit,
Romances I ne'er read like those I have seen;
Nor, if unto the world I ever gave it,
Would some believe that such a tale had been:
But such intent I never had, nor have it;
Some truths are better kept behind a screen,
Especially when they would look like lies;
I therefore deal in generalities.

LXXXI

'An oyster may be cross'd in love,' — and why?
Because he mopeth idly in his shell,
And heaves a lonely subterraqueous sigh,
Much as a monk may do within his cell:
And *à-propos* of monks, their piety
With sloth hath found it difficult to dwell;
Those vegetables of the Catholic creed
Are apt exceedingly to run to seed.

LXXXII

O Wilberforce! thou man of black renown,
Whose merit none enough can sing or say,
Thou hast struck one immense Colossus down,
Thou moral Washington of Africa!
But there 's another little thing, I own,
Which you should perpetrate some summer's day,
And set the other half of earth to rights;
You have freed the *blacks* — now pray shut up the whites.

LXXXIII

Shut up the bald-coot bully Alexander!
Ship off the Holy Three to Senegal;
Teach them that 'sauce for goose is sauce for gander,'
And ask them how *they* like to be in thrall?

Shut up each high heroic salamander,
Who eats fire gratis (since the pay 's but small);
Shut up — no, *not* the King, but the Pavilion,
Or else 't will cost us all another million.

LXXXIV

Shut up the world at large, let Bedlam out;
And you will be perhaps surprised to find
All things pursue exactly the same route,
As now with those of *soi-disant* sound mind.
This I could prove beyond a single doubt,
Were there a jot of sense among mankind;
But till that *point d'appui* is found, alas!
Like Archimedes, I leave earth as 't was.

LXXXV

Our gentle Adeline had one defect —
Her heart was vacant, though a splendid mansion;
Her conduct had been perfectly correct,
As she had seen nought claiming its expansion.
A wavering spirit may be easier wreck'd,
Because 't is frailer, doubtless, than a stanch one;
But when the latter works its own undoing,
Its inner crash is like an earthquake's ruin.

LXXXVI

She loved her lord, or thought so; but *that* love
Cost her an effort, which is a sad toil,
The stone of Sysiphus, if once we move
Our feelings 'gainst the nature of the soil.
She had nothing to complain of, or reprove,
No bickerings, no connubial turmoil:
Their union was a model to behold,
Serene and noble, — conjugal, but cold.

LXXXVII

There was no great disparity of years,
Though much in temper; but they never clash'd:
They moved like stars united in their spheres,
Or like the Rhone by Leman's waters wash'd,
Where mingled and yet separate appears
The river from the lake, all bluely dash'd
Through the serene and placid glassy deep,
Which fain would lull its river-child to sleep.

LXXXVIII

Now when she once had ta'en an interest
In any thing, however she might flatter
Herself that her intentions were the best,
Intense intentions are a dangerous matter:
Impressions were much stronger than she guess'd,
And gather'd as they run like growing water
Upon her mind; the more so, as her breast
Was not at first too readily impress'd.

LXXXIX

But when it was, she had that lurking demon
Of double nature, and thus doubly named —
Firmness yclept in heroes, kings, and seamen,
That is, when they succeed; but greatly blamed
As *obstinacy*, both in men and women,
Whene'er their triumph pales, or star is tamed: —
And 't will perplex the casuist in morality
To fix the due bounds of this dangerous quality.

XC

Had Buonaparte won at Waterloo,
It had been firmness; now 't is pertinacity:
Must the event decide between the two?
I leave it to your people of sagacity
To draw the line between the false and true,
If such can e'er be drawn by man's capacity:
My business is with Lady Adeline,
Who in her way too was a heroine.

XCI

She knew not her own heart; then how should I?
I think not she was *then* in love with Juan:
If so, she would have had the strength to fly
The wild sensation, unto her a new one:

She merely felt a common sympathy
(I will not say it was a false or true one)
In him, because she thought he was in danger, —
Her husband's friend, her own, young, and a stranger,

XCII

She was, or thought she was, his friend — and this
Without the farce of friendship, or romance
Of Platonism, which leads so oft amiss
Ladies who have studied friendship but in France,
Or Germany, where people *purely* kiss.
To thus much Adeline would not advance;
But of such friendship as man's may to man be
She was as capable as woman can be.

XCIII

No doubt the secret influence of the sex
Will there, as also in the ties of blood,
An innocent predominance annex,
And tune the concord to a finer mood.
If free from passion, which all friendship checks,
And your true feelings fully understood,
No friend like to a woman earth discovers,
So that you have not been nor will be lovers.

XCIV

Love bears within its breast the very germ
Of change; and how should this be otherwise?
That violent things more quickly find a term
Is shown through nature's whole analogies;
And how should the most fierce of all be firm?
Would you have endless lightning in the skies?
Methinks Love's very title says enough:
How should 'the *tender* passion' e'er be *tough?*

XCV

Alas! by all experience, seldom yet
(I merely quote what I have heard from many)
Had lovers not some reason to regret
The passion which made Solomon a zany.
I've also seen some wives (not to forget
The marriage state, the best or worst of any)
Who were the very paragons of wives,
Yet made the misery of at least two lives.

XCVI

I've also seen some female *friends* ('tis odd,
But true — as, if expedient, I could prove)
That faithful were through thick and thin, abroad,
At home, far more than ever yet was Love —
Who did not quit me when Oppression trod
Upon me; whom no scandal could remove;
Who fought, and fight, in absence, too, my battles,
Despite the snake Society's loud rattles.

XCVII

Whether Don Juan and chaste Adeline
Grew friends in this or any other sense,
Will be discuss'd hereafter, I opine:
At present I am glad of a pretence
To leave them hovering, as the effect is fine,
And keeps the atrocious reader in *suspense;*
The surest way for ladies and for books
To bait their tender, or their tenter, hooks.

XCVIII

Whether they rode, or walk'd, or studied Spanish
To read Don Quixote in the original,
A pleasure before which all others vanish;
Whether their talk was of the kind call'd 'small,'
Or serious, are the topics I must banish
To the next Canto; where perhaps I shall
Say something to the purpose, and display
Considerable talent in my way.

XCIX

Above all, I beg all men to forbear
Anticipating aught about the matter:
They'll only make mistakes about the fair,
And Juan too, especially the latter.
And I shall take a much more serious air
Than I have yet done, in this epic satire

It is not clear that Adeline and Juan
Will fall; but if they do, 't will be their ruin.

C

But great things spring from little: — Would you think,
That in our youth, as dangerous a passion
As e'er brought man and woman to the brink
Of ruin, rose from such a slight occasion,
As few would ever dream could form the link
Of such a sentimental situation?
You 'll never guess, I 'll bet you millions, milliards —
It all sprung from a harmless game at billiards.

CI

'T is strange, — but true; for truth is always strange;
Stranger than fiction; if it could be told,
How much would novels gain by the exchange!
How differently the world would men behold!
How oft would vice and virtue places change!
The new world would be nothing to the old,
If some Columbus of the moral seas
Would show mankind their souls' antipodes.

CII

What 'antres vast and deserts idle' then
Would be discover'd in the human soul!
What icebergs in the hearts of mighty men,
With self-love in the centre as their pole!
What Anthropophagi are nine of ten
Of those who hold the kingdoms in control!
Were things but only call'd by their right name,
Cæsar himself would be ashamed of fame.

CANTO THE FIFTEENTH

I

Ah! — What should follow slips from my reflection;
Whatever follows ne'ertheless may be
As à-propos of hope or retrospection,
As though the lurking thought had follow'd free.
All present life is but an interjection,
An 'Oh!' or 'Ah!' of joy or misery,
Or a 'Ha! ha!' or 'Bah!' — a yawn, or 'Pooh!'
Of which perhaps the latter is most true.

II

But, more or less, the whole 's a syncopé
Or a singultus — emblems of emotion,
The grand antithesis to great ennui,
Wherewith we break our bubbles on the ocean, —
That watery outline of eternity,
Or miniature at least, as is my notion,
Which ministers unto the soul's delight,
In seeing matters which are out of sight.

III

But all are better than the sigh suppressed,
Corroding in the cavern of the heart,
Making the countenance a masque of rest,
And turning human nature to an art.
Few men dare show their thoughts of worst or best;
Dissimulation always sets apart
A corner for herself; and therefore fiction
Is that which passes with least contradiction.

IV

Ah! who can tell? Or rather, who can not
Remember, without telling, passion's errors?
The drainer of oblivion, even the sot,
Hath got blue devils for his morning mirrors:
What though on Lethe's stream he seem to float,
He cannot sink his tremors or his terrors;
The ruby glass that shakes within his hand
Leaves a sad sediment of Time's worst sand.

V

And as for love — O love! — We will proceed.
The Lady Adeline Amundeville,
A pretty name as one would wish to read,
Must perch harmonious on my tuneful quill.
There 's music in the sighing of a reed;
There 's music in the gushing of a rill;

There 's music in all things, if men had ears:
Their earth is but an echo of the spheres.

VI

The Lady Adeline, right honourable,
And honour'd, ran a risk of growing less so;
For few of the soft sex are very stable
In their resolves — alas! that I should say so!
They differ as wine differs from its label,
When once decanted; — I presume to guess so,
But will not swear: yet both upon occasion,
Till old, may undergo adulteration.

VII

But Adeline was of the purest vintage,
The unmingled essence of the grape; and yet
Bright as a new Napoleon from its mintage,
Or glorious as a diamond richly set;
A page where Time should hesitate to print age,
And for which Nature might forego her debt —
Sole creditor whose process doth involve in 't
The luck of finding every body solvent.

VIII

O Death! thou dunnest of all duns! thou daily
Knockest at doors, at first with modest tap,
Like a meek tradesman when, approaching palely,
Some splendid debtor he would take by sap:
But oft denied, as patience 'gins to fail, he
Advances with exasperated rap,
And (if let in) insists, in terms unhandsome,
On ready money, or 'a draft on Ransom.'

IX

Whate'er thou takest, spare a while poor Beauty!
She is so rare, and thou hast so much prey.
What though she now and then may slip from duty,
The more 's the reason why you ought to stay.
Gaunt Gourmand! with whole nations for your booty,
You should be civil in a modest way:
Suppress, then, some slight feminine diseases,
And take as many heroes as Heaven pleases.

X

Fair Adeline, the more ingenuous
Where she was interested (as was said),
Because she was not apt, like some of us,
To like too readily, or too high bred
To show it (points we need not now discuss) —
Would give up artlessly both heart and head
Unto such feelings as seem'd innocent,
For objects worthy of the sentiment.

XI

Some parts of Juan's history, which Rumour,
That live gazette, had scatter'd to disfigure,
She had heard; but women hear with more good humour
Such aberrations than we men of rigour:
Besides, his conduct, since in England, grew more
Strict, and his mind assumed a manlier vigour;
Because he had, like Alcibiades,
The art of living in all climes with ease.

XII

His manner was perhaps the more seductive,
Because he ne'er seem'd anxious to seduce;
Nothing affected, studied, or constructive
Of coxcombry or conquest: no abuse
Of his attractions marr'd the fair perspective,
To indicate a Cupidon broke loose,
And seem to say, 'Resist us if you can' —
Which makes a dandy while it spoils a man.

XIII

They are wrong — that 's not the way to set about it;
As, if they told the truth, could well be shown.

But, right or wrong, Don Juan was without it;
In fact, his manner was his own alone;
Sincere he was — at least you could not doubt it,
In listening merely to his voice's tone.
The devil hath not in all his quiver's choice
An arrow for the heart like a sweet voice.

XIV

By nature soft, his whole address held off
Suspicion: though not timid, his regard
Was such as rather seem'd to keep aloof,
To shield himself than put you on your guard:
Perhaps 't was hardly quite assured enough,
But modesty 's at times its own reward,
Like virtue; and the absence of pretension
Will go much farther than there 's need to mention.

XV

Serene, accomplish'd, cheerful but not loud;
Insinuating without insinuation;
Observant of the foibles of the crowd,
Yet ne'er betraying this in conversation;
Proud with the proud, yet courteously proud,
So as to make them feel he knew his station
And theirs: — without a struggle for priority,
He neither brook'd nor claim'd superiority.

XVI

That is, with men: with women he was what
They pleased to make or take him for; and their
Imagination 's quite enough for that:
So that the outline 's tolerably fair,
They fill the canvass up — and 'verbum sat.'
If once their phantasies be brought to bear
Upon an object, whether sad or playful,
They can transfigure brighter than a Raphael.

XVII

Adeline, no deep judge of character,
Was apt to add a colouring from her own:
'T is thus the good will amiably err,
And eke the wise, as has been often shown.
Experience is the chief philosopher,
But saddest when his science is well known:
And persecuted sages teach the schools
Their folly in forgetting there are fools.

XVIII

Was it not so, great Locke? and greater Bacon?
Great Socrates? And thou, Diviner still,
Whose lot it is by man to be mistaken,
And thy pure creed made sanction of all ill?
Redeeming worlds to be by bigots shaken,
How was thy toil rewarded? We might fill
Volumes with similar sad illustrations,
But leave them to the conscience of the nations.

XIX

I perch upon an humbler promontory,
Amidst life's infinite variety:
With no great care for what is nicknamed glory,
But speculating as I cast mine eye
On what may suit or may not suit my story,
And never straining hard to versify,
I rattle on exactly as I 'd talk
With any body in a ride or walk.

XX

I don't know that there may be much ability
Shown in this sort of desultory rhyme;
But there 's a conversational facility,
Which may round off an hour upon a time.
Of this I 'm sure at least, there 's no servility
In mine irregularity of chime,
Which rings what 's uppermost of new or hoary,
Just as I feel the 'Improvvisatore.'

XXI

'Omnia vult *belle* Matho dicere — dic aliquando
Et *bene*, dic *neutrum*, dic aliquando *male*.'
The first is rather more than mortal can do;
The second may be sadly done or gaily;
The third is still more difficult to stand to;
The fourth we hear, and see, and say too, daily.

The whole together is what I could wish
To serve in this conundrum of a dish.

XXII

A modest hope — but modesty 's my forte,
And pride my feeble: — let us ramble on.
I meant to make this poem very short,
But now I can't tell where it may not run.
No doubt, if I had wish'd to pay my court
To critics, or to hail the *setting* sun
Of tyranny of all kinds, my concision
Were more; — but I was born for opposition.

XXIII

But then 't is mostly on the weaker side;
So that I verily believe if they
Who now are basking in their full-blown pride
Were shaken down, and 'dogs had had their day,'
Though at the first I might perchance deride
Their tumble, I should turn the other way,
And wax an ultra-royalist in loyalty,
Because I hate even democratic royalty.

XXIV

I think I should have made a decent spouse,
If I had never proved the soft condition;
I think I should have made monastic vows,
But for my own peculiar superstition:
'Gainst rhyme I never should have knock'd my brows,
Nor broken my own head, nor that of Priscian,
Nor worn the motley mantle of a poet,
If some one had not told me to forego it.

XXV

But 'laissez aller' — knights and dames I sing,
Such as the times may furnish. 'T is a flight
Which seems at first to need no lofty wing,
Plumed by Longinus or the Stagyrite:
The difficulty lies in colouring
(Keeping the due proportions still in sight)
With nature manners which are artificial,
And rend'ring general that which is especial.

XXVI

The difference is, that in the days of old
Men made the manners; manners now make men —
Pinn'd like a flock, and fleeced too in their fold,
At least nine, and a ninth beside of ten.
Now this at all events must render cold
Your writers, who must either draw again
Days better drawn before, or else assume
The present, with their common-place costume.

XXVII

We 'll do our best to make the best on 't: — March!
March, my Muse! If you cannot fly, yet flutter;
And when you may not be sublime, be arch,
Or starch, as are the edicts statesmen utter.
We surely may find something worth research:
Columbus found a new world in a cutter,
Or brigantine, or pink, of no great tonnage,
While yet America was in her non-age.

XXVIII

When Adeline, in all her growing sense
Of Juan's merits and his situation,
Felt on the whole an interest intense, —
Partly perhaps because a fresh sensation,
Or that he had an air of innocence,
Which is for innocence a sad temptation, —
As women hate half measures, on the whole,
She 'gan to ponder how to save his soul.

XXIX

She had a good opinion of advice,
Like all who give and eke receive it gratis,
For which small thanks are still the market price,
Even where the article at highest rate is:
She thought upon the subject twice or thrice,
And morally decided, the best state is
For morals, marriage; and this question carried,
She seriously advised him to get married.

XXX

Juan replied, with all becoming deference,
He had a predilection for that tie;

But that, at present, with immediate reference
To his own circumstances, there might lie
Some difficulties, as in his own preference,
Or that of her to whom he might apply:
That still he 'd wed with such or such a lady,
If that they were not married all already.

XXXI

Next to the making matches for herself,
And daughters, brothers, sisters, kith or kin,
Arranging them like books on the same shelf,
There 's nothing women love to dabble in
More (like a stock-holder in growing pelf)
Than match-making in general: 't is no sin
Certes, but a preventative, and therefore
That is, no doubt, the only reason wherefore.

XXXII

But never yet (except of course a miss
Unwed, or mistress never to be wed,
Or wed already, who object to this)
Was there chaste dame who had not in her head
Some drama of the marriage unities,
Observed as strictly both at board and bed
As those of Aristotle, though sometimes
They turn out melodrames or pantomimes.

XXXIII

They generally have some only son,
Some heir to a large property, some friend
Of an old family, some gay Sir John,
Or grave Lord George, with whom perhaps might end
A line, and leave posterity undone,
Unless a marriage was applied to mend
The prospect and their morals: and besides,
They have at hand a blooming glut of brides.

XXXIV

From these they will be careful to select,
For this an heiress, and for that a beauty;
For one a songstress who hath no defect,
For t' other one who promises much duty;
For this a lady no one can reject,
Whose sole accomplishments were quite a booty;
A second for her excellent connections;
A third, because there can be no objections.

XXXV

When Rapp the Harmonist embargo'd marriage
In his harmonious settlement (which flourishes
Strangely enough as yet without miscarriage,
Because it breeds no more mouths than it nourishes,
Without those sad expenses which disparage
What Nature naturally most encourages) —
Why call'd he 'Harmony' a state sans wedlock?
Now here I 've got the preacher at a dead lock.

XXXVI

Because he either meant to sneer at harmony
Or marriage, by divorcing them thus oddly.
But whether reverend Rapp learn'd this in Germany
Or no, 't is said his sect is rich and godly,
Pious and pure, beyond what I can term any
Of ours, although they propagate more broadly.
My objection 's to his title, not his ritual,
Although I wonder how it grew habitual.

XXXVII

But Rapp is the reverse of zealous matrons,
Who favour, malgré Malthus, generation —
Professors of that genial art, and patrons
Of all the modest part of propagation;
Which after all at such a desperate rate runs,
That half its produce tends to emigration,
That sad result of passions and potatoes —
Two weeds which pose our economic Catos.

XXXVIII

Had Adeline read Malthus? I can't tell;
I wish she had: his book 's the eleventh commandment,
Which says, 'Thou shalt not marry,' unless *well*:
This he (as far as I can understand) meant.

'T is not my purpose on his views to dwell
Nor canvass what so 'eminent a hand' meant;
But certes it conducts to lives ascetic,
Or turning marriage into arithmetic.

XXXIX

But Adeline, who probably presumed
That Juan had enough of maintenance,
Or *separate* maintenance, in case 't was doom'd —
As on the whole it is an even chance
That bridegrooms, after they are fairly *groom'd*,
May retrograde a little in the dance
Of marriage (which might form a painter's fame,
Like Holbein's 'Dance of Death' — but 't is the same); —

XL

But Adeline determined Juan's wedding
In her own mind, and that 's enough for woman:
But then, with whom? There was the sage Miss Reading,
Miss Raw, Miss Flaw, Miss Showman, and Miss Knowman,
And the two fair co-heiresses Giltbedding.
She deem'd his merits something more than common:
All these were unobjectionable matches,
And might go on, if well wound up, like watches.

XLI

There was Miss Millpond, smooth as summer's sea,
That usual paragon, an only daughter,
Who seem'd the cream of equanimity
Till skimm'd — and then there was some milk and water,
With a slight shade of blue too, it might be,
Beneath the surface; but what did it matter?
Love 's riotous, but marriage should have quiet,
And being consumptive, live on a milk diet.

XLII

And then there was the Miss Audacia Shoestring,
A dashing demoiselle of good estate,
Whose heart was fix'd upon a star or blue string;
But whether English dukes grew rare of late,
Or that she had not harp'd upon the true string,
By which such sirens can attract our great,
She took up with some foreign younger brother,
A Russ or Turk — the one 's as good as t' other.

XLIII

And then there was — but why should I go on,
Unless the ladies should go off? — there was
Indeed a certain fair and fairy one,
Of the best class, and better than her class, —
Aurora Raby, a young star who shone
O'er life, too sweet an image for such glass,
A lovely being, scarcely form'd or moulded,
A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded;

XLIV

Rich, noble, but an orphan; left an only
Child to the care of guardians good and kind;
But still her aspect had an air so lonely!
Blood is not water; and where shall we find
Feelings of youth like those which overthrown lie
By death, when we are left, alas! behind,
To feel, in friendless palaces, a home
Is wanting, and our best ties in the tomb?

XLV

Early in years, and yet more infantine
In figure, she had something of sublime
In eyes which sadly shone, as seraphs' shine.
All youth — but with an aspect beyond time;
Radiant and grave — as pitying man's decline;
Mournful — but mournful of another's crime,
She look'd as if she sat by Eden's door,
And grieved for those who could return no more.

XLVI

She was a Catholic, too, sincere, austere,
  As far as her own gentle heart allow'd,
And deem'd that fallen worship far more dear
  Perhaps because 't was fallen: her sires were proud
Of deeds and days when they had fill'd the ear
  Of nations, and had never bent or bow'd
To novel power; and as she was the last,
She held their old faith and old feelings fast.

LXVII

She gazed upon a world she scarcely knew,
  As seeking not to know it; silent, lone,
As grows a flower, thus quietly she grew,
  And kept her heart serene within its zone.
There was awe in the homage which she drew;
  Her spirit seem'd as seated on a throne
Apart from the surrounding world, and strong
In its own strength — most strange in one so young!

XLVIII

Now it so happen'd, in the catalogue
  Of Adeline, Aurora was omitted,
Although her birth and wealth had given her vogue
  Beyond the charmers we have already cited;
Her beauty also seem'd to form no clog
  Against her being mention'd as well fitted,
By many virtues, to be worth the trouble
Of single gentlemen who would be double.

XLIX

And this omission, like that of the bust
  Of Brutus at the pageant of Tiberius,
Made Juan wonder, as no doubt he must.
  This he express'd half smiling and half serious;
When Adeline replied with some disgust,
  And with an air, to say the least, imperious,
She marvell'd 'what he saw in such a baby
As that prim, silent, cold Aurora Raby?'

L

Juan rejoin'd — 'She was a Catholic,
  And therefore fittest, as of his persuasion;
Since he was sure his mother would fall sick,
  And the Pope thunder excommunication,
If —' But here Adeline, who seem'd to pique
  Herself extremely on the inoculation
Of others with her own opinions, stated —
As usual — the same reason which she late did.

LI

And wherefore not? A reasonable reason,
  If good, is none the worse for repetition;
If bad, the best way 's certainly to tease on,
  And amplify: you lose much by concision,
Whereas insisting in or out of season
  Convinces all men, even a politician;
Or — what is just the same — it wearies out.
So the end 's gain'd, what signifies the route?

LII

Why Adeline had this slight prejudice —
  For prejudice it was — against a creature
As pure as sanctity itself from vice,
  With all the added charm of form and feature,
For me appears a question far too nice,
  Since Adeline was liberal by nature;
But nature 's nature, and has more caprices
Than I have time, or will, to take to pieces.

LIII

Perhaps she did not like the quiet way
  With which Aurora on those baubles look'd,
Which charm most people in their earlier day:
  For there are few things by mankind less brook'd,
And womankind too, if we so may say,
  Than finding thus their genius stand rebuked,
Like 'Anthony's by Cæsar,' by the few
Who look upon them as they ought to do.

LIV

It was not envy — Adeline had none;
  Her place was far beyond it, and her mind.
It was not scorn — which could not light on one
  Whose greatest *fault* was leaving few to find.

It was not jealousy, I think: but shun
Following the 'ignes fatui' of mankind.
It was not — but 't is easier far, alas! 431
To say what it was not than what it was.

LV

Little Aurora deem'd she was the theme
Of such discussion. She was there a guest;
A beauteous ripple of the brilliant stream
Of rank and youth, though purer than the rest,
Which flow'd on for a moment in the beam
Time sheds a moment o'er each sparkling crest.
Had she known this, she would have calmly smiled —
She had so much, or little, of the child. 440

LVI

The dashing and proud air of Adeline
Imposed not upon her: she saw her blaze
Much as she would have seen a glow-worm shine,
Then turn'd unto the stars for loftier rays.
Juan was something she could not divine,
Being no sibyl in the new world's ways;
Yet she was nothing dazzled by the meteor,
Because she did not pin her faith on feature.

LVII

His fame too, — for he had that kind of fame
Which sometimes plays the deuce with womankind, 450
A heterogeneous mass of glorious blame,
Half virtues and whole vices being combined;
Faults which attract because they are not tame;
Follies trick'd out so brightly that they blind: —
These seals upon her wax made no impression,
Such was her coldness or her self-possession.

LVIII

Juan knew nought of such a character —
High, yet resembling not his lost Haidée;
Yet each was radiant in her proper sphere:
The island girl, bred up by the lone sea, 460
More warm, as lovely, and not less sincere,
Was Nature's all: Aurora could not be,
Nor would be thus: — the difference in them
Was such as lies between a flower and gem.

LIX

Having wound up with this sublime comparison,
Methinks we may proceed upon our narrative,
And, as my friend Scott says, 'I sound my warison;'
Scott, the superlative of my comparative —
Scott, who can paint your Christian knight or Saracen,
Serf, lord, man, with such skill as none would share it, if 470
There had not been one Shakspeare and Voltaire,
Of one or both of whom he seems the heir.

LX

I say, in my slight way I may proceed
To play upon the surface of humanity.
I write the world, nor care if the world read,
At least for this I cannot spare its vanity.
My Muse hath bred, and still perhaps may breed
More foes by this same scroll: when I began it, I
Thought that it might turn out so — *now* I *know* it,
But still I am, or was, a pretty poet. 480

LXI

The conference or congress (for it ended
As congresses of late do) of the Lady
Adeline and Don Juan rather blended
Some acids with the sweets — for she was heady;
But, ere the matter could be marr'd or mended,
The silvery bell rang, not for 'dinner ready,'
But for that hour, call'd *half-hour*, given to dress,
Though ladies' robes seem scant enough for less.

LXII

Great things were now to be achieved at table,
With massy plate for armour, knives and forks 490

For weapons; but what Muse since Homer 's able
(His feasts are not the worst part of his works)
To draw up in array a single day-bill
Of modern dinners? where more mystery lurks,
In soups or sauces, or a sole ragoût,
Than witches, b—ches, or physicians brew.

LXIII

There was a goodly 'soupe à la *bonne femme*,'
Though God knows whence it came from; there was, too,
A turbot for relief of those who cram,
Relieved with 'dindon à la Parigeux;'
There also was —— the sinner that I am!
How shall I get this gourmand stanza through? —
'Soupe à la Beauveau,' whose relief was dory,
Relieved itself by pork, for greater glory.

LXIV

But I must crowd all into one grand mess
Or mass; for should I stretch into detail,
My Muse would run much more into excess,
Than when some squeamish people deem her frail.
But though a 'bonne vivante,' I must confess
Her stomach 's not her peccant part; this tale
However doth require some slight refection,
Just to relieve her spirits from dejection.

LXV

Fowls 'à la Condé,' slices eke of salmon,
With 'sauces Génévoises,' and haunch of venison;
Wines too, which might again have slain young Ammon —
A man like whom I hope we shan't see many soon;
They also set a glazed Westphalian ham on,
Whereon Apicius would bestow his benison;
And then there was champagne with foaming whirls,
As white as Cleopatra's melted pearls.

LXVI

Then there was God knows what 'à l'Allemande,'
'A l'Espagnole,' 'timballe,' and 'salpicon' —
With things I can't withstand or understand,
Though swallow'd with much zest upon the whole;
And 'entremets' to piddle with at hand,
Gently to lull down the subsiding soul;
While great Lucullus' *Robe triumphal* muffles
(*There 's fame*) young partridge fillets, deck'd with truffles.

LXVII

What are the *fillets* on the victor's brow
To these? They are rags or dust. Where is the arch
Which nodded to the nation's spoils below?
Where the triumphal chariots' haughty march?
Gone to where victories must like dinners go.
Farther I shall not follow the research:
But oh! ye modern heroes with your cartridges,
When will your names lend lustre e'en to partridges?

LXVIII

Those truffles too are no bad accessaries,
Follow'd by 'petits puits d'amour' — a dish
Of which perhaps the cookery rather varies,
So every one may dress it to his wish,
According to the best of dictionaries,
Which encyclopedize both flesh and fish;
But even sans 'confitures,' it no less true is,
There 's pretty picking in those 'petits puits.'

LXIX

The mind is lost in mighty contemplation
Of intellect expanded on two courses;
And indigestion's grand multiplication
Requires arithmetic beyond my forces.
Who would suppose, from Adam's simple ration,
That cookery could have call'd forth such resources,
As form a science and a nomenclature
From out the commonest demands of nature?

LXX

The glasses jingled, and the palates tingled;
The diners of celebrity dined well;
The ladies with more moderation mingled
In the feast, pecking less than I can tell;
Also the younger men too: for a springald
Can't, like ripe age, in gormandize excel,
But thinks less of good eating than the whisper
(When seated next him) of some pretty lisper.

LXXI

Alas! I must leave undescribed the gibier,
The salmi, the consommé, the purée,
All which I use to make my rhymes run glibber
Than could roast beef in our rough John Bull way:
I must not introduce even a spare rib here,
'Bubble and squeak' would spoil my liquid lay:
But I have dined, and must forego, alas!
The chaste description even of a 'bécasse;'

LXXII

And fruits, and ice, and all that art refines
From nature for the service of the goût —
Taste or the *gout*, — pronounce it as inclines
Your stomach! Ere you dine, the French will do;
But *after*, there are sometimes certain signs
Which prove plain English truer of the two.
Hast ever *had* the *gout*? I have not had it —
But I may have, and you too, reader, dread it.

LXXIII

The simple olives, best allies of wine,
Must I pass over in my bill of fare?
I must, although a favourite 'plat' of mine
In Spain, and Lucca, Athens, every where:
On them and bread 't was oft my luck to dine,
The grass my table-cloth, in open-air,
On Sunium or Hymettus, like Diogenes,
Of whom half my philosophy the progeny is.

LXXIV

Amidst this tumult of fish, flesh, and fowl,
And vegetables, all in masquerade,
The guests were placed according to their roll,
But various as the various meats display'd:
Don Juan sat next an 'à l'Espagnole' —
No damsel, but a dish, as hath been said;
But so far like a lady, that 't was drest
Superbly, and contain'd a world of zest.

LXXV

By some odd chance too, he was placed between
Aurora and the Lady Adeline —
A situation difficult, I ween,
For man therein, with eyes and heart, to dine.
Also the conference which we have seen
Was not such as to encourage him to shine;
For Adeline, addressing few words to him,
With two transcendent eyes seem'd to look through him.

LXXVI

I sometimes almost think that eyes have ears:
This much is sure, that, out of earshot, things
Are somehow echoed to the pretty dears,
Of which I can't tell whence their knowledge springs.
Like that same mystic music of the spheres,
Which no one hears, so loudly though it rings,
'T is wonderful how oft the sex have heard
Long dialogues — which pass'd without a word!

LXXVII

Aurora sat with that indifference
Which piques a preux chevalier — as it ought:
Of all offences that 's the worst offence,
Which seems to hint you are not worth a thought.
Now Juan, though no coxcomb in pretence,
Was not exactly pleased to be so caught;
Like a good ship entangled among ice,
And after so much excellent advice.

LXXVIII

To his gay nothings, nothing was replied,
Or something which was nothing, as urbanity
Required. Aurora scarcely look'd aside,
Nor even smiled enough for any vanity.

The devil was in the girl! Could it be pride?
Or modesty, or absence, or inanity?
Heaven knows! But Adeline's malicious eyes
Sparkled with her successful prophecies,

LXXIX

And look'd as much as if to say, 'I said it;'
A kind of triumph I 'll not recommend,
Because it sometimes, as I have seen or read it,
Both in the case of lover and of friend,
Will pique a gentleman, for his own credit,
To bring what was a jest to a serious end:
For all men prophesy what *is* or *was*,
And hate those who won't let them come to pass.

LXXX

Juan was drawn thus into some attentions,
Slight but select, and just enough to express,
To females of perspicuous comprehensions,
That he would rather make them more than less.
Aurora at the last (so history mentions,
Though probably much less a fact than guess)
So far relax'd her thoughts from their sweet prison,
As once or twice to smile, if not to listen.

LXXXI

From answering she began to question; this
With her was rare: and Adeline, who as yet
Thought her predictions went not much amiss,
Began to dread she'd thaw to a coquette —
So very difficult, they say, it is
To keep extremes from meeting, when once set
In motion; but she here too much refined —
Aurora's spirit was not of that kind.

LXXXII

But Juan had a sort of winning way,
A proud humility, if such there be,
Which show'd such deference to what females say,
As if each charming word were a decree.
His tact, too, temper'd him from grave to gay,
And taught him when to be reserved or free:
He had the art of drawing people out,
Without their seeing what he was about.

LXXXIII

Aurora, who in her indifference
Confounded him in common with the crowd
Of flatterers, though she deem'd he had more sense
Than whispering foplings, or than witlings loud —
Commenced (from such slight things will great commence)
To feel that flattery which attracts the proud
Rather by deference than compliment,
And wins even by a delicate dissent.

LXXXIV

And then he had good looks; — that point was carried
Nem. con. amongst the women, which I grieve
To say leads oft to *crim. con.* with the married —
A case which to the juries we may leave,
Since with digressions we too long have tarried.
Now though we know of old that looks deceive,
And always have done, somehow these good looks
Make more impression than the best of books.

LXXXV

Aurora, who look'd more on books than faces,
Was very young, although so very sage,
Admiring more Minerva than the Graces,
Especially upon a printed page.
But Virtue's self, with all her tightest laces,
Has not the natural stays of strict old age;
And Socrates, that model of all duty,
Own'd to a penchant, though discreet, for beauty.

LXXXVI

And girls of sixteen are thus far Socratic,
But innocently so, as Socrates;

And really, if the sage sublime and Attic
At seventy years had phantasies like these,
Which Plato in his dialogues dramatic
Has shown, I know not why they should displease
In virgins — always in a modest way,
Observe; for that with me 's a 'sine quâ.'

LXXXVII

Also observe, that, like the great Lord Coke
(See Littleton), whene'er I have express'd
Opinions two, which at first sight may look
Twin opposites, the second is the best.
Perhaps I have a third, too, in a nook,
Or none at all — which seems a sorry jest:
But if a writer should be quite consistent,
How could he possibly show things existent?

LXXXVIII

If people contradict themselves, can I
Help contradicting them, and every body,
Even my veracious self? — But that 's a lie:
I never did so, never will — how should I?
He who doubts all things nothing can deny:
Truth's fountains may be clear — her streams are muddy,
And cut through such canals of contradiction,
That she must often navigate o'er fiction.

LXXXIX

Apologue, fable, poesy, and parable,
Are false, but may be render'd also true,
By those who sow them in a land that 's arable.
'T is wonderful what fable will not do!
'T is said it makes reality more bearable:
But what 's reality? Who has its clue?
Philosophy? No: she too much rejects.
Religion? *Yes;* but which of all her sects?

XC

Some millions must be wrong, that 's pretty clear;
Perhaps it may turn out that all were right.
God help us! Since we have need on our career
To keep our holy beacons always bright,
'T is time that some new prophet should appear,
Or old indulge man with a second sight.
Opinions wear out in some thousand years,
Without a small refreshment from the spheres.

XCI

But here again, why will I thus entangle
Myself with metaphysics? None can hate
So much as I do any kind of wrangle;
And yet, such is my folly, or my fate,
I always knock my head against some angle
About the present, past, or future state:
Yet I wish well to Trojan and to Tyrian,
For I was bred a moderate Presbyterian.

XCII

But though I am a temperate theologian,
And also meek as a metaphysician,
Impartial between Tyrian and Trojan,
As Eldon on a lunatic commission, —
In politics my duty is to show John
Bull something of the lower world's condition.
It makes my blood boil like the springs of Hecla,
To see men let these scoundrel sovereigns break law.

XCIII

But politics, and policy, and piety,
Are topics which I sometimes introduce,
Not only for the sake of their variety,
But as subservient to a moral use;
Because my business is to *dress* society,
And stuff with *sage* that very verdant goose.
And now, that we may furnish with some matter all
Tastes, we are going to try the supernatural.

XCIV

And now I will give up all argument;
And positively henceforth no temptation
Shall 'fool me to the top up of my bent:' —
Yes, I 'll begin a thorough reformation.
Indeed, I never knew what people meant
By deeming that my Muse's conversation

Was dangerous; — I think she is as harmless
As some who labour more and yet may charm less.

XCV

Grim reader! did you ever see a ghost?
No; but you have heard — I understand — be dumb!
And don't regret the time you may have lost,
For you have got that pleasure still to come:
And do not think I mean to sneer at most
Of these things, or by ridicule benumb
That source of the sublime and the mysterious: —
For certain reasons my belief is serious.

XCVI

Serious? You laugh; — you may: that will I not;
My smiles must be sincere or not at all.
I say I do believe a haunted spot
Exists — and where? That shall I not recall,
Because I 'd rather it should be forgot,
'Shadows the soul of Richard' may appal.
In short, upon that subject I 've some qualms very
Like those of the philosopher of Malmsbury.

XCVII

The night (I sing by night — sometimes an owl,
And now and then a nightingale) is dim,
And the loud shriek of sage Minerva's fowl
Rattles around me her discordant hymn:
Old portraits from old walls upon me scowl —
I wish to heaven they would not look so grim;
The dying embers dwindle in the grate —
I think too that I have sate up too late:

XCVIII

And therefore, though 't is by no means my way
To rhyme at noon — when I have other things
To think of, if I ever think — I say
I feel some chilly midnight shudderings,
And prudently postpone, until mid-day,
Treating a topic which, alas! but brings
Shadows; — but you must be in my condition
Before you learn to call this superstition.

XCIX

Between two worlds life hovers like a star,
'Twixt night and morn, upon the horizon's verge.
How little do we know that which we are!
How less what we may be! The eternal surge
Of time and tide rolls on, and bears afar
Our bubbles; as the old burst, new emerge,
Lash'd from the foam of ages; while the graves
Of empires heave but like some passing waves.

CANTO THE SIXTEENTH

I

The antique Persians taught three useful things,
To draw the bow, to ride, and speak the truth.
This was the mode of Cyrus, best of kings —
A mode adopted since by modern youth.
Bows have they, generally with two strings;
Horses they ride without remorse or ruth;
At speaking truth perhaps they are less clever,
But draw the long bow better now than ever.

II

The cause of this effect, or this defect, —
'For this effect defective comes by cause,' —
Is what I have not leisure to inspect;
But this I must say in my own applause,
Of all the Muses that I recollect,
Whate'er may be her follies or her flaws
In some things, mine 's beyond all contradiction
The most sincere that ever dealt in fiction.

III

And as she treats all things, and ne'er retreats
From any thing, this epic will contain
A wilderness of the most rare conceits,
Which you might elsewhere hope to find in vain.

'T is true there be some bitters with the sweets,
Yet mix'd so slightly, that you can't complain,
But wonder they so few are, since my tale is
'De rebus cunctis et quibusdam aliis.'

IV

But of all truths which she has told, the most
True is that which she is about to tell.
I said it was a story of a ghost —
What then? I only know it so befell.
Have you explored the limits of the coast,
Where all the dwellers of the earth must dwell?
'T is time to strike such puny doubters dumb as
The sceptics who would not believe Columbus.

V

Some people would impose now with authority,
Turpin's or Monmouth Geoffry's Chronicle;
Men whose historical superiority
Is always greatest at a miracle.
But Saint Augustine has the great priority,
Who bids all men believe the impossible,
Because 't is so. Who nibble, scribble, quibble, he
Quiets at once with '*quia* impossibile.'

VI

And therefore, mortals, cavil not at all;
Believe: — if 't is improbable you *must*,
And if it is impossible, you *shall*:
'T is always best to take things upon trust.
I do not speak profanely, to recall
Those holier mysteries which the wise and just
Receive as gospel, and which grow more rooted,
As all truths must, the more they are disputed:

VII

I merely mean to say what Johnson said,
That in the course of some six thousand years,
All nations have believed that from the dead
A visitant at intervals appears;
And what is strangest upon this strange head,
Is, that whatever bar the reason rears
'Gainst such belief, there 's something stronger still
In its behalf, let those deny who will.

VIII

The dinner and the soirée too were done,
The supper too discuss'd, the dames admired,
The banqueteers had dropp'd off one by one —
The song was silent, and the dance expired:
The last thin petticoats were vanish'd, gone
Like fleecy clouds into the sky retired,
And nothing brighter gleam'd through the saloon
Than dying tapers — and the peeping moon

IX

The evaporation of a joyous day
Is like the last glass of champagne, without
The foam which made its virgin bumper gay;
Or like a system coupled with a doubt;
Or like a soda bottle when its spray
Has sparkled and let half its spirit out;
Or like a billow left by storms behind,
Without the animation of the wind;

X

Or like an opiate, which brings troubled rest,
Or none; or like — like nothing that I know
Except itself; — such is the human breast;
A thing, of which similitudes can show
No real likeness, — like the old Tyrian vest
Dyed purple, none at present can tell how,
If from a shell-fish or from cochineal.
So perish every tyrant's robe piece-meal!

XI

But next to dressing for a rout or ball,
Undressing is a woe; our robe de chambre
May sit like that of Nessus, and recall
Thoughts quite as yellow, but less clear than amber.
Titus exclaim'd, 'I 've lost a day!' Of all
The nights and days most people can remember

(I have had of both, some not to be disdain'd),
I wish they'd state how many they have gain'd.

XII

And Juan, on retiring for the night,
Felt restless, and perplex'd, and compromised:
He thought Aurora Raby's eyes more bright
Than Adeline (such is advice) advised;
If he had known exactly his own plight,
He probably would have philosophised:
A great resource to all, and ne'er denied
Till wanted; therefore Juan only sigh'd.

XIII

He sigh'd; — the next resource is the full moon,
Where all sighs are deposited; and now
It happen'd luckily, the chaste orb shone
As clear as such a climate will allow;
And Juan's mind was in the proper tone
To hail her with the apostrophe — 'O thou!'
Of amatory egotism the *Tuism*,
Which further to explain would be a truism.

XIV

But lover, poet, or astronomer,
Shepherd, or swain, whoever may behold,
Feel some abstraction when they gaze on her:
Great thoughts we catch from thence (besides a cold
Sometimes, unless my feelings rather err);
Deep secrets to her rolling light are told;
The ocean's tides and mortals' brains she sways,
And also hearts, if there be truth in lays.

XV

Juan felt somewhat pensive, and disposed
For contemplation rather than his pillow:
The Gothic chamber, where he was enclosed,
Let in the rippling sound of the lake's billow,
With all the mystery by midnight caused;
Below his window waved (of course) a willow;
And he stood gazing out on the cascade
That flash'd and after darken'd in the shade.

XVI

Upon his table or his toilet, — *which*
Of these is not exactly ascertain'd
(I state this, for I am cautious to a pitch
Of nicety, where a fact is to be gain'd), —
A lamp burn'd high, while he leant from a niche,
Where many a Gothic ornament remain'd,
In chisell'd stone and painted glass, and all
That time has left our fathers of their hall.

XVII

Then, as the night was clear though cold, he threw
His chamber door wide open — and went forth
Into a gallery, of a sombre hue,
Long, furnish'd with old pictures of great worth,
Of knights and dames heroic and chaste too,
As doubtless should be people of high birth.
But by dim lights the portraits of the dead
Have something ghastly, desolate, and dread.

XVIII

The forms of the grim knight and pictured saint
Look living in the moon; and as you turn
Backward and forward to the echoes faint
Of your own footsteps — voices from the urn
Appear to wake, and shadows wild and quaint
Start from the frames which fence their aspects stern,
As if to ask how you can dare to keep
A vigil there, where all but death should sleep.

XIX

And the pale smile of beauties in the grave,
The charms of other days, in starlight gleams,
Glimmer on high; their buried locks still wave
Along the canvass; their eyes glance like dreams

On ours, or spars within some dusky cave,
But death is imaged in their shadowy beams.
A picture is the past; even ere its frame
Be gilt, who sate hath ceased to be the same.

XX

As Juan mused on mutability,
Or on his mistress — terms synonymous —
No sound except the echo of his sigh
Or step ran sadly through that antique house;
When suddenly he heard, or thought so, nigh,
A supernatural agent — or a mouse,
Whose little nibbling rustle will embarrass
Most people as it plays along the arras.

XXI

It was no mouse, but lo! a monk, array'd
In cowl and beads and dusky garb, appear'd,
Now in the moonlight, and now lapsed in shade,
With steps that trod as heavy, yet unheard;
His garments only a slight murmur made;
He moved as shadowy as the sisters weird,
But slowly; and as he pass'd Juan by,
Glanced, without pausing, on him a bright eye.

XXII

Juan was petrified; he had heard a hint
Of such a spirit in these halls of old,
But thought, like most men, there was nothing in 't
Beyond the rumour which such spots unfold,
Coin'd from surviving superstition's mint,
Which passes ghosts in currency like gold,
But rarely seen, like gold compared with paper.
And did he see this? or was it a vapour?

XXIII

Once, twice, thrice pass'd, repass'd — the thing of air,
Or earth beneath, or heaven, or t' other place;
And Juan gazed upon it with a stare,
Yet could not speak or move; but, on its base
As stands a statue, stood: he felt his hair
Twine like a knot of snakes around his face;
He tax'd his tongue for words, which were not granted,
To ask the reverend person what he wanted.

XXIV

The third time, after a still longer pause,
The shadow pass'd away — but where? the hall
Was long, and thus far there was no great cause
To think his vanishing unnatural:
Doors there were many, through which, by the laws
Of physics, bodies whether short or tall
Might come or go; but Juan could not state
Through which the spectre seem'd to evaporate.

XXV

He stood — how long he knew not, but it seem'd
An age — expectant, powerless, with his eyes
Strain'd on the spot where first the figure gleam'd;
Then by degrees recall'd his energies,
And would have pass'd the whole off as a dream,
But could not wake; he was, he did surmise,
Waking already, and return'd at length
Back to his chamber, shorn of half his strength.

XXVI

All there was as he left it: still his taper
Burnt, and not *blue*, as modest tapers use,
Receiving sprites with sympathetic vapour;
He rubb'd his eyes, and they did not refuse
Their office; he took up an old newspaper;
The paper was right easy to peruse;
He read an article the king attacking,
And a long eulogy of 'patent blacking.'

XXVII

This savour'd of this world; but his hand shook —
He shut his door, and after having read

A paragraph, I think about Horne Tooke,
Undrest, and rather slowly went to bed.
There, couch'd all snugly on his pillow's nook,
With what he had seen his phantasy he fed;
And though it was no opiate, slumber crept
Upon him by degrees, and so he slept.

XXVIII

He woke betimes; and, as may be supposed,
Ponder'd upon his visitant or vision,
And whether it ought not to be disclosed,
At risk of being quizz'd for superstition.
The more he thought, the more his mind was posed:
In the mean time, his valet, whose precision
Was great, because his master brook'd no less,
Knock'd to inform him it was time to dress.

XXIX

He dress'd; and like young people he was wont
To take some trouble with his toilet, but
This morning rather spent less time upon 't;
Aside his very mirror soon was put;
His curls fell negligently o'er his front,
His clothes were not curb'd to their usual cut,
His very neckcloth's Gordian knot was tied
Almost an hair's breadth too much on one side.

XXX

And when he walk'd down into the saloon,
He sate him pensive o'er a dish of tea,
Which he perhaps had not discover'd soon,
Had it not happen'd scalding hot to be,
Which made him have recourse unto his spoon;
So much distrait he was, that all could see
That something was the matter — Adeline
The first — but *what* she could not well divine.

XXXI

She look'd, and saw him pale, and turn'd as pale
Herself; then hastily look'd down, and mutter'd
Something, but what 's not stated in my tale.
Lord Henry said his muffin was ill butter'd;
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke play'd with her veil,
And look'd at Juan hard, but nothing utter'd.
Aurora Raby with her large dark eyes
Survey'd him with a kind of calm surprise.

XXXII

But seeing him all cold and silent still,
And everybody wondering more or less,
Fair Adeline enquired, 'If he were ill?'
He started, and said, 'Yes — no — rather — yes.'
The family physician had great skill,
And being present, now began to express
His readiness to feel his pulse and tell
The cause, but Juan said, 'He was quite well.'

XXXIII

'Quite well; yes, — no.' — These answers were mysterious,
And yet his looks appear'd to sanction both,
However they might savour of delirious;
Something like illness of a sudden growth
Weigh'd on his spirit, though by no means serious:
But for the rest, as he himself seem'd loth
To state the case, it might be ta'en for granted
It was not the physician that he wanted.

XXXIV

Lord Henry, who had now discuss'd his chocolate,
Also the muffin whereof he complain'd,
Said, Juan had not got his usual look elate,
At which he marvell'd, since it had not rain'd;
Then ask'd her Grace what news were of the duke of late?
Her Grace replied, *his* Grace was rather pain'd
With some slight, light, hereditary twinges
Of gout, which rusts aristocratic hinges.

XXXV

Then Henry turn'd to Juan, and address'd
A few words of condolence on his state:
'You look,' quoth he, 'as if you had had your rest
Broke in upon by the Black Friar of late.'
'What friar?' said Juan; and he did his best
To put the question with an air sedate,
Or careless; but the effort was not valid
To hinder him from growing still more pallid.

XXXVI

'Oh! have you never heard of the Black Friar?
The spirit of these walls?'—'In truth not I.'
'Why Fame—but Fame you know 's sometimes a liar—
Tells an odd story, of which by and by:
Whether with time the spectre has grown shyer,
Or that our sires had a more gifted eye
For such sights, though the tale is half believed,
The friar of late has not been oft perceived.

XXXVII

'The last time was ——'—'I pray,' said Adeline
(Who watch'd the changes of Don Juan's brow,
And from its context thought she could divine
Connexions stronger then he chose to avow
With this same legend)—'if you but design
To jest, you 'll choose some other theme just now,
Because the present tale has oft been told,
And is not much improved by growing old.'

XXXVIII

'Jest!' quoth Milor; 'why, Adeline, you know
That we ourselves—'twas in the honey moon—
Saw ——'—'Well, no matter, 'twas so long ago;
But, come, I 'll set your story to a tune.'
Graceful as Dian, when she draws her bow,
She seized her harp, whose strings were kindled soon
As touch'd, and plaintively began to play
The air of ''T was a Friar of Orders Gray.'

XXXIX

'But add the words,' cried Henry, 'which you made;
For Adeline is half a poetess,'
Turning round to the rest, he smiling said.
Of course the others could not but express
In courtesy their wish to see display'd
By one *three* talents, for there were no less—
The voice, the words, the harper's skill, at once
Could hardly be united by a dunce.

XL

After some fascinating hesitation,—
The charming of these charmers, who seem bound,
I can't tell why, to this dissimulation,—
Fair Adeline, with eyes fix'd on the ground
At first, then kindling into animation,
Added her sweet voice to the lyric sound,
And sang with much simplicity,—a merit
Not the less precious, that we seldom hear it.

1

Beware! beware! of the Black Friar,
Who sitteth by Norman stone,
For he mutters his prayer in the midnight air,
And his mass of the days that are gone.
When the Lord of the Hill, Amundeville,
Made Norman Church his prey,
And expell'd the friars, one friar still
Would not be driven away.

2

Though he came in his might, with King Henry's right,
To turn church lands to lay,
With sword in hand, and torch to light
Their walls, if they said nay;
A monk remain'd, unchased, unchain'd,
And he did not seem form'd of clay,
For he 's seen in the porch, and he 's seen in the church,
Though he is not seen by day.

3

And whether for good, or whether for ill,
It is not mine to say;
But still with the house of Amundeville
He abideth night and day.
By the marriage-bed of their lords, 't is said,
He flits on the bridal eve;
And 't is held as faith, to their bed of death
He comes—but not to grieve.

4

When an heir is born, he 's heard to mourn,
And when aught is to befall
That ancient line, in the pale moonshine
He walks from hall to hall.
His form you may trace, but not his face,
'T is shadow'd by his cowl;
But his eyes may be seen from the folds between,
And they seem of a parted soul.

5

But beware! beware! of the Black Friar,
He still retains his sway,
For he is yet the church's heir
Whoever may be the lay.
Amundeville is lord by day,
But the monk is lord by night;
Nor wine nor wassail could raise a vassal
To question that friar's right.

6

Say nought to him as he walks the hall,
And he 'll say nought to you;
He sweeps along in his dusky pall,
As o'er the grass the dew.
Then grammercy! for the Black Friar;
Heaven sain him, fair or foul!
And whatsoe'er may be his prayer,
Let ours be for his soul.

XLI

The lady's voice ceased, and the thrilling wires
Died from the touch that kindled them to sound;
And the pause follow'd, which when song expires
Pervades a moment those who listen round;
And then of course the circle much admires,
Nor less applauds, as in politeness bound,
The tones, the feeling, and the execution,
To the performer's diffident confusion.

XLII

Fair Adeline, though in a careless way,
As if she rated such accomplishment
As the mere pastime of an idle day,
Pursued an instant for her own content,
Would now and then as 't were *without* display,
Yet *with* display in fact, at times relent
To such performances with haughty smile,
To show she *could*, if it were worth her while.

XLIII

Now this (but we will whisper it aside)
Was — pardon the pedantic illustration —
Trampling on Plato's pride with greater pride,
As did the Cynic on some like occasion;
Deeming the sage would be much mortified,
Or thrown into a philosophic passion,
For a spoil'd carpet — but the 'Attic Bee'
Was much consoled by his own repartee.

XLIV

Thus Adeline would throw into the shade
(By doing easily, whene'er she chose,
What dilettanti do with vast parade)
Their sort of *half profession;* for it grows
To something like this when too oft display'd;
And that it is so everybody knows
Who have heard Miss That or This, or Lady T'other,
Show off — to please their company or mother.

XLV

Oh! the long evenings of duets and trios!
The admirations and the speculations;
The 'Mamma Mia's!' and the 'Amor Mio's!'
The 'Tanti palpiti's' on such occasions:
The 'Lasciami's,' and quavering 'Addio's!'
Amongst our own most musical of nations;
With 'Tu mi chamas's' from Portingale,
To soothe our ears, lest Italy should fail.

XLVI

In Babylon's bravuras — as the home
Heart-ballads of Green Erin or Gray Highlands,
That bring Lochaber back to eyes that roam
O'er far Atlantic continents or islands,
The calentures of music which o'ercome
All mountaineers with dreams that they are nigh lands,
No more to be beheld but in such visions —
Was Adeline well versed, as compositions.

XLVII

She also had a twilight tinge of '*Blue*,'
Could write rhymes, and compose more than she wrote,
Made epigrams occasionally too
Upon her friends, as everybody ought.
But still from that sublimer azure hue,
So much the present dye, she was remote;

Was weak enough to deem Pope a great poet,
And what was worse, was not ashamed to show it.

XLVIII

Aurora — since we are touching upon taste,
Which now-a-days is the thermometer
By whose degrees all characters are class'd —
Was more Shakspearian, if I do not err.
The worlds beyond this world's perplexing waste
Had more of her existence, for in her
There was a depth of feeling to embrace
Thoughts, boundless, deep, but silent too as Space.

XLIX

Not so her gracious, graceful, graceless Grace,
The full-grown Hebe of Fitz-Fulke, whose mind,
If she had any, was upon her face,
And that was of a fascinating kind.
A little turn for mischief you might trace
Also thereon, — but that 's not much; we find
Few females without some such gentle leaven,
For fear we should suppose us quite in heaven.

L

I have not heard she was at all poetic,
Though once she was seen reading the 'Bath Guide,'
And 'Hayley's Triumphs,' which she deem'd pathetic,
Because she said *her temper* had been tried
So much, the bard had really been prophetic
Of what she had gone through with — since a bride.
But of all verse, what most ensured her praise
Were sonnets to herself, or 'bouts rimés.'

LI

'T were difficult to say what was the object
Of Adeline, in bringing this same lay
To bear on what appear'd to her the subject
Of Juan's nervous feelings on that day.
Perhaps she merely had the simple project
To laugh him out of his supposed dismay;
Perhaps she might wish to confirm him in it,
Though why I cannot say — at least this minute.

LII

But so far the immediate effect
Was to restore him to his self-propriety,
A thing quite necessary to the elect,
Who wish to take the tone of their society:
In which you cannot be too circumspect,
Whether the mode be persiflage or piety,
But wear the newest mantle of hypocrisy,
On pain of much displeasing the gynocracy.

LIII

And therefore Juan now began to rally
His spirits, and without more explanation
To jest upon such themes in many a sally.
Her Grace, too, also seized the same occasion,
With various similar remarks to tally,
But wish'd for a still more detail'd narration
Of this same mystic friar's curious doings,
About the present family's deaths and wooings.

LIV

Of these few could say more than has been said;
They pass'd as such things do, for superstition
With some, while others, who had more in dread
The theme, half credited the strange tradition;
And much was talk'd on all sides on that head:
But Juan, when cross-question'd on the vision,
Which some supposed (though he had not avow'd it)
Had stirr'd him, answer'd in a way to cloud it.

LV

And then, the mid-day having worn to one,
The company prepared to separate;
Some to their several pastimes, or to none,
Some wondering 't was so early, some so late.

There was a goodly match too, to be run
Between some greyhounds on my lord's estate,
And a young race-horse of old pedigree
Match'd for the spring, whom several went to see.

LVI

There was a picture-dealer who had brought
A special Titian, warranted original,
So precious that it was not to be bought,
Though princes the possessor were besieging all.
The king himself had cheapen'd it, but thought
The civil list he deigns to accept (obliging all
His subjects by his gracious acceptation)
Too scanty, in these times of low taxation.

LVII

But as Lord Henry was a connoisseur, —
The friend of artists, if not arts, — the owner,
With motives the most classical and pure,
So that he would have been the very donor,
Rather than seller, had his wants been fewer,
So much he deem'd his patronage an honour,
Had brought the capo d'opera, not for sale,
But for his judgment — never known to fail.

LVIII

There was a modern Goth, I mean a Gothic
Bricklayer of Babel, call'd an architect,
Brought to survey these grey walls, which though so thick,
Might have from time acquired some slight defect;
Who after rummaging the Abbey through thick
And thin, produced a plan whereby to erect
New buildings of correctest conformation,
And throw down old — which he call'd *restoration.*

LIX

The cost would be a trifle — an 'old song,'
Set to some thousands ('t is the usual burden
Of that same tune, when people hum it long) —
The price would speedily repay its worth in
An edifice no less sublime than strong,
By which Lord Henry's good taste would go forth in
Its glory, through all ages shining sunny,
For Gothic daring shown in English money.

LX

There were two lawyers busy on a mortgage
Lord Henry wish'd to raise for a new purchase;
Also a lawsuit upon tenures burgage,
And one on tithes, which sure are Discord's torches,
Kindling Religion till she throws down *her* gage,
'Untying' squires 'to fight against the churches;'
There was a prize ox, a prize pig, and ploughman,
For Henry was a sort of Sabine showman.

LXI

There were two poachers caught in a steel trap,
Ready for gaol, their place of convalescence;
There was a country girl in a close cap
And scarlet cloak (I hate the sight to see, since —
Since — since — in youth, I had the sad mishap —
But luckily I have paid few parish fees since):
That scarlet cloak, alas! unclosed with rigour,
Presents the problem of a double figure.

LXII

A reel within a bottle is a mystery,
One can't tell how it e'er got in or out;
Therefore the present piece of natural history
I leave to those who are fond of solving doubt;
And merely state, though not for the consistory,
Lord Henry was a justice, and that Scout
The constable, beneath a warrant's banner,
Had bagg'd this poacher upon Nature's manor.

LXIII

Now justices of peace must judge all pieces
Of mischief of all kinds, and keep the game
And morals of the country from caprices
Of those who have not a license for the same;
And of all things, excepting tithes and leases,
Perhaps these are most difficult to tame:
Preserving partridges and pretty wenches
Are puzzles to the most precautious benches.

LXIV

The present culprit was extremely pale,
Pale as if painted so; her cheek being red
By nature, as in higher dames less hale
'T is white, at least when they just rise from bed.
Perhaps she was ashamed of seeming frail,
Poor soul! for she was country born and bred,
And knew no better in her immorality
Than to wax white — for blushes are for quality.

LXV

Her black, bright, downcast, yet espiègle eye,
Had gather'd a large tear into its corner,
Which the poor thing at times essay'd to dry,
For she was not a sentimental mourner
Parading all her sensibility,
Nor insolent enough to scorn the scorner,
But stood in trembling, patient tribulation,
To be call'd up for her examination.

LXVI

Of course these groups were scatter'd here and there,
Not nigh the gay saloon of ladies gent.
The lawyers in the study; and in air
The prize pig, ploughman, poachers; the men sent
From town, viz., architect and dealer, were
Both busy (as a general in his tent
Writing despatches) in their several stations,
Exulting in their brilliant lucubrations.

LXVII

But this poor girl was left in the great hall,
While Scout, the parish guardian of the frail,
Discuss'd (he hated beer yclept the 'small')
A mighty mug of *moral* double ale.
She waited until Justice could recall
Its kind attentions to their proper pale,
To name a thing in nomenclature rather
Perplexing for most virgins — a child's father.

LXVIII

You see here was enough of occupation
For the Lord Henry, link'd with dogs and horses.
There was much bustle too, and preparation
Below stairs on the score of second courses;
Because, as suits their rank and situation,
Those who in counties have great land resources
Have 'public days,' when all men may carouse,
Though not exactly what 's call'd 'open house.'

LXIX

But once a week or fortnight, *un*invited
(Thus we translate a *general invitation*)
All country gentlemen, esquired or knighted,
May drop in without cards, and take their station
At the full board, and sit alike delighted
With fashionable wines and conversation;
And, as the isthmus of the grand connection,
Talk o'er themselves the past and next election.

LXX

Lord Henry was a great electioneerer,
Burrowing for boroughs like a rat or rabbit;
But county contests cost him rather dearer,
Because the neighbouring Scotch Earl of Giftgabbit
Had English influence in the self-same sphere here;
His son, the Honourable Dick Dicedrabbit,

Was member for the 'other interest' (meaning
The same self-interest, with a different leaning).

LXXI

Courteous and cautious therefore in his county,
He was all things to all men, and dispensed
To some civility, to others bounty,
And promises to all — which last commenced
To gather to a somewhat large amount, he
Not calculating how much they condensed;
But what with keeping some, and breaking others,
His word had the same value as another's.

LXXII

A friend to freedom and freeholders — yet
No less a friend to government — he held,
That he exactly the just medium hit
'Twixt place and patriotism — albeit compell'd,
Such was his sovereign's pleasure (though unfit,
He added modestly, when rebels rail'd),
To hold some sinecures he wish'd abolish'd,
But that with them all law would be demolish'd.

LXXIII

He was 'free to confess' (whence comes this phrase?
Is 't English? No — 't is only parliamentary)
That innovation's spirit now-a-days
Had made more progress than for the last century.
He would not tread a factious path to praise,
Though for the public weal disposed to venture high;
As for his place, he could but say this of it,
That the fatigue was greater than the profit.

LXXIV

Heaven, and his friends, knew that a private life
Had ever been his sole and whole ambition;
But could he quit his king in times of strife,
Which threaten'd the whole country with perdition?
When demagogues would with a butcher's knife
Cut through and through (oh! damnable incision!)
The Gordian or the Geordi-an knot, whose strings
Have tied together commons, lords, and kings.

LXXV

Sooner 'come place into the civil list
And champion him to the utmost' — he would keep it,
Till duly disappointed or dismiss'd:
Profit he cared not for, let others reap it;
But should the day come when place ceased to exist,
The country would have far more cause to weep it:
For how could it go on? Explain who can!
He gloried in the name of Englishman.

LXXVI

He was as independent — ay, much more —
Than those who were not paid for independence,
As common soldiers, or a common —— shore,
Have in their several arts or parts ascendance
O'er the irregulars in lust or gore,
Who do not give professional attendance.
Thus on the mob all statesmen are as eager
To prove their pride, as footmen to a beggar.

LXXVII

All this (save the last stanza) Henry said,
And thought. I say no more — I 've said too much;
For all of us have either heard or read —
Off — or *upon* the hustings — some slight such
Hints from the independent heart or head
Of the official candidate. I 'll touch
No more on this — the dinner-bell hath rung,
And grace is said; the grace I *should* have sung —

LXXVIII

But I 'm too late, and therefore must make play.
'T was a great banquet, such as Albion old
Was wont to boast — as if a glutton's tray
Were something very glorious to behold.
But 't was a public feast and public day, —
Quite full, right dull, guests hot, and dishes cold,
Great plenty, much formality, small cheer,
And every body out of their own sphere.

LXXIX

The squires familiarly formal, and
My lords and ladies proudly condescending;
The very servants puzzling how to hand
Their plates — without it might be too much bending
From their high places by the sideboard's stand —
Yet, like their masters, fearful of offending.
For any deviation from the graces
Might cost both man and master too — their *places.*

LXXX

There were some hunters bold, and coursers keen,
Whose hounds ne'er err'd, nor greyhounds deign'd to lurch;
Some deadly shots too, Septembrizers, seen
Earliest to rise, and last to quit the search
Of the poor partridge through his stubble screen.
There were some massy members of the church,
Takers of tithes, and makers of good matches,
And several who sung fewer psalms than catches.

LXXXI

There were some country wags too — and, alas!
Some exiles from the town, who had been driven
To gaze, instead of pavement, upon grass,
And rise at nine in lieu of long eleven.
And lo! upon that day it came to pass,
I sate next that o'erwhelming son of heaven,
The very powerful parson, Peter Pith,
The loudest wit I e'er was deafen'd with.

LXXXII

I knew him in his livelier London days,
A brilliant diner out, though but a curate;
And not a joke he cut but earn'd its praise,
Until preferment, coming at a sure rate
(O Providence! how wondrous are thy ways!
Who would suppose thy gifts sometimes obdurate?),
Gave him, to lay the devil who looks o'er Lincoln,
A fat fen vicarage, and nought to think on.

LXXXIII

His jokes were sermons, and his sermons jokes;
But both were thrown away amongst the fens;
For wit hath no great friend in aguish folks.
No longer ready ears and short-hand pens
Imbibed the gay bon mot, or happy hoax:
The poor priest was reduced to common sense,
Or to coarse efforts very loud and long,
To hammer a horse laugh from the thick throng.

LXXXIV

There *is* a difference, says the song, 'between
A beggar and a queen,' or *was* (of late
The latter worse used of the two we 've seen —
But we 'll say nothing of affairs of state);
A difference ''twixt a bishop and a dean,'
A difference between crockery ware and plate,
As between English beef and Spartan broth —
And yet great heroes have been bred by both.

LXXXV

But of all nature's discrepancies, none
Upon the whole is greater than the difference
Beheld between the country and the town,
Of which the latter merits every preference

From those who have few resources of their own,
And only think, or act, or feel, with reference
To some small plan of interest or ambition —
Both which are limited to no condition.

LXXXVI

But 'en avant!' The light loves languish o'er
Long banquets and too many guests, although
A slight repast makes people love much more,
Bacchus and Ceres being, as we know
Even from our grammar upwards, friends of yore
With vivifying Venus, who doth owe
To these the invention of champagne and truffles:
Temperance delights her, but long fasting ruffles.

LXXXVII

Dully past o'er the dinner of the day;
And Juan took his place, he knew not where,
Confused, in the confusion, and distrait,
And sitting as if nail'd upon his chair:
Though knives and forks clank'd round as in a fray,
He seem'd unconscious of all passing there,
Till some one, with a groan, exprest a wish
(Unheeded twice) to have a fin of fish.

LXXXVIII

On which, at the *third* asking of the bans,
He started; and perceiving smiles around
Broadening to grins, he colour'd more than once,
And hastily — as nothing can confound
A wise man more than laughter from a dunce —
Inflicted on the dish a deadly wound,
And with such hurry, that ere he could curb it
He had paid his neighbour's prayer with half a turbot.

LXXXIX

This was no bad mistake, as it occurr'd,
The supplicator being an amateur;
But others, who were left with scarce a third,
Were angry — as they well might, to be sure.
They wonder'd how a young man so absurd
Lord Henry at his table should endure;
And this, and his not knowing how much oats
Had fallen last market, cost his host three votes.

XC

They little knew, or might have sympathised,
That he the night before had seen a ghost,
A prologue which but slightly harmonised
With the substantial company engross'd
By matter, and so much materialised,
That one scarce knew at what to marvel most
Of two things — how (the question rather odd is)
Such bodies could have souls, or souls such bodies.

XCI

But what confused him more than smile or stare
From all the 'squires and 'squiresses around,
Who wonder'd at the abstraction of his air,
Especially as he had been renown'd
For some vivacity among the fair,
Even in the country circle's narrow bound
(For little things upon my lord's estate
Were good small talk for others still less great) —

XCII

Was, that he caught Aurora's eye on his,
And something like a smile upon her cheek.
Now this he really rather took amiss:
In those who rarely smile, their smiles bespeak
A strong external motive; and in this
Smile of Aurora's there was nought to pique
Or hope, or love, with any of the wiles
Which some pretend to trace in ladies' smiles.

XCIII

'T was a mere quiet smile of contemplation,
Indicative of some surprise and pity;

And Juan grew carnation with vexation,
Which was not very wise, and still less witty,
Since he had gain'd at least her observation,
A most important outwork of the city —
As Juan should have known, had not his senses
By last night's ghost been driven from their defences.

XCIV

But what was bad, she did not blush in turn,
Nor seem embarrass'd — quite the contrary;
Her aspect was as usual, still — *not* stern —
And she withdrew, but cast not down, her eye,
Yet grew a little pale — with what? concern?
I know not; but her colour ne'er was high —
Though sometimes faintly flush'd — and always clear,
As deep seas in a sunny atmosphere.

XCV

But Adeline was occupied by fame
This day; and watching, witching, condescending
To the consumers of fish, fowl, and game,
And dignity with courtesy so blending,
As all must blend whose part it is to aim
(Especially as the sixth year is ending)
At their lord's, son's, or similar connection's
Safe conduct through the rocks of re-elections.

XCVI

Though this was most expedient on the whole,
And usual — Juan, when he cast a glance
On Adeline while playing her grand rôle,
Which she went through as though it were a dance,
Betraying only now and then her soul
By a look scarce perceptibly askance
(Of weariness or scorn), began to feel
Some doubt how much of Adeline was *real*;

XCVII

So well she acted all and every part
By turns — with that vivacious versatility,
Which many people take for want of heart.
They err — 't is merely what is call'd mobility,
A thing of temperament and not of art,
Though seeming so, from its supposed facility;
And false — though true; for surely they 're sincerest
Who are strongly acted on by what is nearest.

XCVIII

This makes your actors, artists, and romancers,
Heroes sometimes, though seldom — sages never;
But speakers, bards, diplomatists, and dancers,
Little that 's great, but much of what is clever;
Most orators, but very few financiers,
Though all Exchequer chancellors endeavour,
Of late years, to dispense with Cocker's rigours,
And grow quite figurative with their figures.

XCIX

The poets of arithmetic are they
Who, though they prove not two and two to be
Five, as they might do in a modest way,
Have plainly made it out that four are three,
Judging by what they take, and what they pay.
The Sinking Fund's unfathomable sea,
That most unliquidating liquid, leaves
The debt unsunk, yet sinks all it receives.

C

While Adeline dispensed her airs and graces,
The fair Fitz-Fulke seem'd very much at ease;
Though too well bred to quiz men to their faces,
Her laughing blue eyes with a glance could seize
The ridicules of people in all places —
That honey of your fashionable bees —
And store it up for mischievous enjoyment;
And this at present was her kind employment.

CI

However, the day closed, as days must close;
The evening also waned — and coffee came.
Each carriage was announced, and ladies rose,
And curtsying off, as curtsies country dame,
Retired: with most unfashionable bows
Their docile esquires also did the same,
Delighted with their dinner and their host,
But with the Lady Adeline the most.

CII

Some praised her beauty; others her great grace;
The warmth of her politeness, whose sincerity
Was obvious in each feature of her face,
Whose traits were radiant with the rays of verity.
Yes; *she* was truly worthy *her* high place!
No one could envy her deserved prosperity.
And then her dress — what beautiful simplicity
Draperied her form with curious felicity!

CIII

Meanwhile sweet Adeline deserved their praises,
By an impartial indemnification
For all her past exertion and soft phrases,
In a most edifying conversation,
Which turn'd upon their late guests' miens and faces,
And families, even to the last relation;
Their hideous wives, their horrid selves and dresses,
And truculent distortion of their tresses.

CIV

True, *she* said little — 't was the rest that broke
Forth into universal epigram;
But then 't was to the purpose what she spoke:
Like Addison's 'faint praise,' so wont to damn,
Her own but served to set off every joke,
As music chimes in with a melodrame.
How sweet the task to shield an absent friend!
I ask but this of mine, to — *not* defend.

CV

There were but two exceptions to this keen
Skirmish of wits o'er the departed; one
Aurora, with her pure and placid mien;
And Juan, too, in general behind none
In gay remark on what he had heard or seen,
Sate silent now, his usual spirits gone:
In vain he heard the others rail or rally,
He would not join them in a single sally.

CVI

'T is true he saw Aurora look as though
She approved his silence; she perhaps mistook
Its motive for that charity we owe
But seldom pay the absent, nor would look
Farther — it might or might not be so.
But Juan, sitting silent in his nook,
Observing little in his reverie,
Yet saw this much, which he was glad to see.

CVII

The ghost at least had done him this much good,
In making him as silent as a ghost,
If in the circumstances which ensued
He gain'd esteem where it was worth the most.
And certainly Aurora had renew'd
In him some feelings he had lately lost,
Or harden'd; feelings which, perhaps ideal,
Are so divine, that I must deem them real: —

CVIII

The love of higher things and better days;
The unbounded hope, and heavenly ignorance
Of what is call'd the world, and the world's ways;
The moments when we gather from a glance
More joy than from all future pride or praise,
Which kindle manhood, but can ne'er entrance
The heart in an existence of its own,
Of which another's bosom is the zone.

CIX

Who would not sigh Αι αι ταν Κυθερειαν,
That *hath* a memory, or that *had* a heart?

Alas! *her* star must fade like that of Dian:
Ray fades on ray, as years on years depart.
Anacreon only had the soul to tie an
Unwithering myrtle round the unblunted dart
Of Eros: but though thou hast play'd us many tricks,
Still we respect thee, 'Alma Venus Genetrix!'

CX

And full of sentiments, sublime as billows
Heaving between this world and worlds beyond,
Don Juan, when the midnight hour of pillows
Arrived, retired to his; but to despond
Rather than rest. Instead of poppies, willows
Waved o'er his couch; he meditated, fond
Of those sweet bitter thoughts which banish sleep,
And make the worldling sneer, the youngling weep.

CXI

The night was as before: he was undrest,
Saving his night-gown, which is an undress;
Completely 'sans culotte,' and without vest;
In short, he hardly could be clothed with less:
But apprehensive of his spectral guest,
He sate with feelings awkward to express
(By those who have not had such visitations),
Expectant of the ghost's fresh operations.

CXII

And not in vain he listen'd; — Hush! what's that?
I see — I see — Ah, no! — 't is not — yet 't is —
Ye powers! it is the — the — the — Pooh! the cat!
The devil may take that stealthy pace of his!
So like a spiritual pit-a-pat,
Or tiptoe of an amatory Miss,
Gliding the first time to a rendezvous,
And dreading the chaste echoes of her shoe.

CXIII

Again — what is 't? The wind? No, no — this time
It is the sable friar as before,
With awful footsteps regular as rhyme,
Or (as rhymes may be in these days) much more.
Again through shadows of the night sublime,
When deep sleep fell on men, and the world wore
The starry darkness round her like a girdle
Spangled with gems — the monk made his blood curdle.

CXIV

A noise like to wet fingers drawn on glass,
Which sets the teeth on edge; and a slight clatter,
Like showers which on the midnight gusts will pass,
Sounding like very supernatural water,
Came over Juan's ear, which throbb'd, alas!
For immaterialism 's a serious matter;
So that even those whose faith is the most great
In souls immortal, shun them tête-à-tête.

CXV

Were his eyes open? — Yes! and his mouth too.
Surprise has this effect — to make one dumb,
Yet leave the gate which eloquence slips through
As wide as if a long speech were to come.
Nigh and more nigh the awful echoes drew,
Tremendous to a mortal tympanum:
His eyes were open, and (as was before
Stated) his mouth. What open'd next? — the door.

CXVI

It open'd with a most infernal creak,
Like that of hell. 'Lasciate ogni speranza
Voi che entrate!' The hinge seem'd to speak,
Dreadful as Dante's rhima, or this stanza;
Or — but all words upon such themes are weak:
A single shade 's sufficient to entrance a
Hero — for what is substance to a spirit?
Or how is 't *matter* trembles to come near it?

CXVII

The door flew wide, — not swiftly, but, as fly
The sea-gulls, with a steady, sober flight, —
And then swung back; nor close — but stood awry,
Half letting in long shadows on the light,
Which still in Juan's candlesticks burn'd high,
For he had two, both tolerably bright,
And in the door-way, darkening darkness, stood
The sable friar in his solemn hood.

CXVIII

Don Juan shook, as erst he had been shaken
The night before; but being sick of shaking,
He first inclined to think he had been mistaken;
And then to be ashamed of such mistaking;
His own internal ghost began to awaken
Within him, and to quell his corporal quaking —
Hinting that soul and body on the whole
Were odds against a disembodied soul.

CXIX

And then his dread grew wrath, and his wrath fierce,
And he arose, advanced — the shade retreated;
But Juan, eager now the truth to pierce,
Follow'd, his veins no longer cold, but heated,
Resolved to thrust the mystery carte and tierce,
At whatsoever risk of being defeated:
The ghost stopp'd, menaced, then retired, until
He reach'd the ancient wall, then stood stone still.

CXX

Juan put forth one arm — Eternal powers!
It touch'd no soul, nor body, but the wall,
On which the moonbeams fell in silvery showers,
Chequer'd with all the tracery of the hall;
He shudder'd, as no doubt the bravest cowers
When he can't tell what 't is that doth appal.
How odd, a single hobgoblin's non-entity
Should cause more fear than a whole host's identity.

CXXI

But still the shade remain'd: the blue eyes glared,
And rather variably for stony death:
Yet one thing rather good the grave had spared,
The ghost had a remarkably sweet breath.
A straggling curl show'd he had been fair-hair'd;
A red lip, with two rows of pearls beneath,
Gleam'd forth, as through the casement's ivy shroud
The moon peep'd, just escaped from a grey cloud.

CXXII

And Juan, puzzled, but still curious, thrust
His other arm forth — Wonder upon wonder!
It press'd upon a hard but glowing bust,
Which beat as if there was a warm heart under.
He found, as people on most trials must,
That he had made at first a silly blunder,
And that in his confusion he had caught
Only the wall, instead of what he sought.

CXXIII

The ghost, if ghost it were, seem'd a sweet soul
As ever lurk'd beneath a holy hood:
A dimpled chin, a neck of ivory, stole
Forth into something much like flesh and blood;
Back fell the sable frock and dreary cowl,
And they reveal'd — alas! that e'er they should!
In full, voluptuous, but *not o'er*grown bulk,
The phantom of her frolic Grace — Fitz-Fulke!

CANTO THE SEVENTEENTH

[First printed in the edition of 1903 from a manuscript in the possession of Lady Dorchester, the daughter of John Cam Hobhouse.]

I

The world is full of orphans: firstly, those
Who are so in the strict sense of the phrase;

But many a lonely tree the loftier grows
Than others crowded in the Forest's maze. —
The next are such as are not doomed to lose
Their tender parents in their budding days,
But, merely, their parental tenderness,
Which leaves them orphans of the heart no less.

II

The next are '*only* Children,' as they are styled,
Who grow up *Children* only, since th' old saw
Pronounces that an 'only 's' a spoilt child —
But not to go too far, I hold it law,
That where their education, harsh or mild,
Transgresses the great bounds of love or awe,
The sufferers — be 't in heart or intellect —
Whate'er the *cause*, are orphans in *effect*.

III

But to return unto the stricter rule —
As far as words make rules — our common notion
Of orphan paints at once a parish school,
A half-starved babe, a wreck upon Life's ocean,
A human (what the Italians nickname) 'Mule'!
A theme for Pity or some worse emotion;
Yet, if examined, it might be admitted
The wealthiest orphans are to be more pitied.

IV

Too soon they are Parents to themselves: for what
Are Tutors, Guardians, and so forth, compared
With Nature's genial Genitors? so that
A child of Chancery, that Star-Chamber ward
(I 'll take the likeness I can first come at),
Is like — a duckling by Dame Partlett rear'd,
And frights — especially if 't is a daughter,
Th' old Hen — by running headlong to the water.

V

There is a common-place book argument,
Which glibly glides from every tongue;
When any dare a new light to present,
'If you are right, then everybody 's wrong'!
Suppose the converse of this precedent
So often urged, so loudly and so long;
'If you are wrong, then everybody 's right'!
Was ever everybody yet so quite?

VI

Therefore I would solicit free discussion
Upon all points — no matter what, or whose —
Because as Ages upon Ages push on,
The last is apt the former to accuse
Of pillowing its head on a pin-cushion,
Heedless of pricks because it was obtuse:
What was a paradox becomes a truth or
A something like it — witness Luther!

VII

The Sacraments have been reduced to two,
And Witches unto none, though somewhat late
Since burning aged women (save a few —
Not witches only b——ches — who create
Mischief in families, as some know or knew,
Should still be singed, but lightly, let me state)
Has been declared an act of inurbanity
Malgré Sir Matthew Hales's great humanity.

VIII

Great Galileo was debarr'd the Sun,
Because he fix'd it; and, to stop his talking,
How Earth could round the solar orbit run,
Found his own legs embargo'd from mere walking:
The man was well-nigh dead, ere men begun
To think his skull had not some need of caulking;
But now, it seems, he 's right — his notion just:
No doubt a consolation to his dust.

IX

Pythagoras, Locke, Socrates — but pages
Might be fill'd up, as vainly as before,
With the sad usage of all sorts of sages,
Who, in his life-time, each, was deem'd a Bore!

The loftiest minds outrun their tardy ages:
This they must bear with and, perhaps, much more;
The wise man 's sure when he no more can share it, he
Will have a firm Post Obit on posterity.

X

If such doom waits each intellectual Giant,
We little people in our lesser way,
In Life's small rubs should surely be more pliant,
And so for one will I — as well I may —
Would that I were less bilious — but, oh, fie on 't !
Just as I make my mind up every day,
To be a '*totus, teres*,' Stoic, Sage,
The wind shifts and I fly into a rage.

XI

Temperate I am — yet never had a temper;
Modest I am — yet with some slight assurance;
Changeable too — yet somehow '*Idem semper ;*'
Patient — but not enamour'd of endurance;
Cheerful — but, sometimes, rather apt to whimper;
Mild — but at times a sort of '*Hercules furens ;*'
So that I almost think that the same skin
For one without — has two or three within.

XII

Our Hero was, in Canto the Sixteenth,
Left in a tender moonlight situation,
Such as enables Man to show his strength
Moral or physical: on this occasion
Whether his virtue triumph'd — or, at length,
His vice — for he was of a kindling nation —
Is more than I shall venture to describe; —
Unless some Beauty with a kiss should bribe.

XIII

I leave the thing a problem, like all things: —
The morning came — and breakfast, tea and toast,
Of which most men partake, but no one sings.
The company whose birth, wealth, worth, has cost
My trembling Lyre already several strings,
Assembled with our hostess, and mine host;
The guests dropp'd in — the last but one, Her Grace,
The latest, Juan, with his virgin face.

XIV

Which best it is to encounter — Ghost, or none,
'T were difficult to say; but Juan look'd
As if he had combated with more than one,
Being wan and worn, with eyes that hardly brook'd
The light that through the Gothic window shone:
Her Grace, too, had a sort of air rebuked —
Seem'd pale and shiver'd, as if she had kept
A vigil, or dreamt rather more than slept.

NOTES

NOTES

Page 1. *Le Cosmopolite.* [By Fougeret de Monbron. Byron elsewhere speaks of the book as a 'great favourite.']

Page 2. *Dr. Beattie makes the following observation.* [In a letter to Blacklock, September 22, 1766.]

Page 2. *Sainte-Palaye.* [*Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, by De la Curne de Sainte-Palaye, Paris, 1781.]

Page 2. *Roland.* [*Recherches sur les Prérogatives des Dames chez les Gaulois sur les Cours d'Amours*, by le President Rolland, Paris, 1787.]

Page 2. '*No waiter, but a knight templar.*' *The Rovers, or the Double Arrangement.* [By Hookham Frere in the *Anti-Jacobin.*]

Page 2. *A modern Timon.* [Byron had already compared himself with the Athenian Misanthrope in his early verses, *Childish Recollections.*]

Page 2. *A poetical Zeluco.* [It was Dr. John Moore's object in his romance entitled *Zeluco* to trace the fatal effects of a mother's fond compliance with the humors of an only child.]

Page 2. To IANTHE. [The Lady Charlotte Harley, second daughter of Edward fifth Earl of Oxford, in the autumn of 1812, when these lines were addressed to her, had not completed her eleventh year. Mr. Westall's portrait of the juvenile beauty was painted at Lord Byron's request.]

Page 5, line 117. *Thus to the elements he pour'd his last 'Good Night.'* [See *Lord Maxwell's Good Night*, in Scott's *Border Minstrelsy:* —

'Adieu, madame, my mother dear.']

Line 134. *Come hither, hither, my little page!* [This 'little page' was Robert Rushton, the son of one of Lord Byron's tenants. 'I take Robert with me,' says the poet in a letter to his mother, June 22, 1809; 'I like him, because, like myself, he seems a friendless animal.' — Seeing that the boy was 'sorrowful' at the separation from his parents, Lord Byron, on reaching Gibraltar, sent him back to England.]

Page 6, line 157. *Mine own would not be dry.* [Here follows in the original MS.: —

My Mother is a high-born dame,
And much misliketh me;
She saith my riot bringeth shame
On all my ancestry:
I had a sister once I ween,
Whose tears perhaps will flow;
But her fair face I have not seen
For three long years and moe.]

Line 158. *Come hither, hither, my staunch yeoman.* [William Fletcher, the faithful valet, who, after a service of twenty years, received the 'Pilgrim's' last words at Missolonghi.]

Line 189. *He'd tear me where he stands.* [Here follows in the original MS.: —

Methinks it would my bosom glad,
To change my proud estate,
And be again a laughing lad
With one beloved playmate.
Since youth I scarce have pass'd an hour
Without disgust or pain,
Except sometimes in Lady's bower,
Or when the bowl I drain.]

Line 197. *My native land — Good Night!* [Originally, the 'little page' and the 'yeoman' were introduced in the following stanzas: —

And of his train there was a henchman page,
A peasant boy, who served his master well;
And often would his pranksome prate engage
Childe Harold's ear, when his proud heart did swell
With sable thoughts that he disdain'd to tell.
Then would he smile on him, and Alwin smiled,
When aught that from his young lips archly fell
The gloomy film from Harold's eye beguiled;
And pleasèd for a glimpse appear'd the woeful Childe:

Him and one yeoman only did he take
To travel eastward to a far countrie;
And, though the boy was grieved to leave the lake
On whose fair banks he grew from infancy,
Eftsoons his little heart beat merrily
With hope of foreign nations to behold,
And many things right marvellous to see,
Of which our vaunting voyagers oft have told,
In many a tome as true as Mandeville's of old.]

Page 7, line 255. *And rest ye at 'Our Lady's house of woe.'* The convent of 'Our Lady of Punishment,' *Nossa Señora de Pena*, on the summit of the rock. Below, at some distance, is the Cork Convent, where St. Honorius dug his den, over which is his epitaph. From the hills, the sea adds to the beauty of the view. — *Note to First Edition.* — Since the publication of this poem, I have been informed of the misapprehension of the term *Nossa Señora de Peña.* It was owing to the want of the *tilde* or mark over the *n*, which alters the signification of the word: with it, *Peña* signifies a rock; without it, *Pena* has the sense I adopted. I do not think it necessary to alter the passage; as, though the common acception affixed to it is, 'Our Lady of the Rock,' I may well assume the other sense from the severities practised there. — *Note to Second Edition.*

Line 275. *There thou too, Vathek! England's wealthiest son.* [William Beckford (1759–1844), who inherited from his father large estates in the West Indies, resided at Cintra for two years. *Vathek*, his principal work, Byron says, 'was one of the tales I had a very early admiration of. For correctness of costume, beauty of description, and power of imagination, it far surpasses all European imitations; and bears such marks of originality, that those who have visited the East will find some difficulty in believing it to be more than a translation. As an eastern tale, even *Rasselas* must bow before it; his "happy valley" will not bear a comparison with the "Hall of Eblis."']

Page 8, line 288. *Behold the hall where chiefs were late convened!* The Convention of Cintra was signed in the palace of the Marchese Marialva. ['The armistice, the negotiations, the convention itself, and the execution of its provisions, were all commenced, conducted, and concluded, at the distance of thirty miles from Cintra, with which place they had not the slightest connection, political, military, or local; yet Lord Byron has gravely asserted, in prose and verse, that the convention was signed at the Marquis of Marialva's house at Cintra; and the author of *The Diary of an Invalid*, improving upon the poet's discovery, detected the stains of the ink spilt by Junot upon the occasion.'— Napier's *History of the Peninsular War*, i. 161. The definitive convention for the evacuation of Portugal by the British army is dated 'Head Quarters, Lisbon, August 30, 1808.' Byron was not a regular student, but his memory was prodigious and he carried with him lightly a store of historical and classical allusions. To annotate this part of *Childe Harold* adequately would require large drafts from the history of the Peninsular War.]

Line 296. *Whereat the Urchin points, and laughs with all his soul.* [The passage stood differently in the original MS. The following stanzas were struck out at the suggestion of Byron's friend Dallas: —

In golden characters right well design'd,
First on the list appeareth one 'Junot;'
Then certain other glorious names we find,
Which rhyme compelleth me to place below;
Dull victors! baffled by a vanquish'd foe,
Wheedled by conynge tongues of laurels due,
Stand, worthy of each other, in a row —
Sir Arthur, Harry, and the dizzard Hew
Dalrymple, seely wight, sore dupe of t' other tew.

Convention is the dwarfish demon styled
That foil'd the knights in Marialva's dome:
Of brains (if brains they had) he them beguiled,
And turn'd a nation's shallow joy to gloom.
For well I wot, when first the news did come,
That Vimiera's field by Gaul was lost,
For paragraph ne paper scarce had room,
Such Pæans teem'd for our triumphant host,
In *Courier*, *Chronicle*, and eke in *Morning Post:*

But when Convention sent his handy-work,
Pens, tongues, feet, hands, combined in wild uproar;
Mayor, aldermen, laid down the uplifted fork;
The Bench of Bishops half forgot to snore;
Stern Cobbett, who for one whole week forbore
To question aught, once more with transport leapt,
And bit his devilish quill agen, and swore
With foe such treaty never should be kept,
Then burst the blatant beast, and roar'd, and raged, and — slept!

Thus unto Heaven appeal'd the people: Heaven,
Which loves the lieges of our gracious King,
Decreed, that, ere our generals were forgiven,
Inquiry should be held about the thing.
But Mercy cloak'd the babes beneath her wing;
And as they spared our foes, so spared we them
(Where was the pity of our sires for Byng?);
Yet knaves, not idiots, should the law condemn;
Then live, ye gallant knights! and bless your judges' phlegm!]

Line 334. *Where dwelt of yore the Lusians' luckless queen.* [Maria Francesca. 'Her luckless Majesty went subsequently mad; and Dr. Willis, who so dexterously cudgelled kingly pericraniums, could make nothing of hers.'—*Byron MS.* She died in Brazil in 1816. 'About ten miles to the right of Cintra,' says Lord Byron in a letter to his mother, 'is the palace of Mafra, the boast of Portugal, as it might be of any country, in point of magnificence, without elegance. There is a convent annexed: the monks, who possess large revenues, are courteous enough, and understand Latin; so that we had a long conversation. They have a large library, and asked me if the English had *any books* in their country.']

Page 9, line 389. *When Cava's traitor-sire first call'd the band.* [In revenge for the violation of his daughter Cava, or Florinda, by King Roderick, Count Julian, one of the Gothic monarch's lieutenants, summoned the Moors to Spain. Pelagio, or Pelayo, whose standard was an oaken cross, resisted most successfully the Moorish invasion.]

Page 10, line 430. *For on this morn three potent Nations meet.* [The battle of Talavera.]

Page 11, line 459. *Oh, Albuera, glorious field of grief!* [This stanza is not in the original MS. It was written at Newstead, in August, 1811, shortly after the battle of Albuera, May 16, in which Lord Beresford, with great loss to the English, defeated Soult.]

Line 508. *No! as he speeds, he chants 'Vivā el Rey!'* 'Vivā el Rey Fernando!' Long live King Ferdinand! is the chorus of most of the Spanish patriotic songs. They are chiefly in dispraise of the old king Charles, the Queen, and the Prince of Peace. I have heard many of them; some of the airs are beautiful. Don Manual Godoy, the *Principe de la Paz*, of an ancient but decayed family, was born at Badajoz, on the frontiers of Portugal, and was originally in the ranks of the Spanish guards; till his person attracted the queen's eyes, and raised him to the dukedom of Alcudia, etc., etc. It is to this man that the Spaniards universally impute the ruin of their country.

Page 12, line 523. *Bears in his cap the badge of crimson hue.* The red cockade, with 'Fernando VII.' in the centre.

Line 558. *Is it for this the Spanish maid, aroused.* The Maid of Saragoza, who by her valour elevated herself to the highest rank of heroines. When the author was at Seville, she walked daily on the Prado, decorated with medals and orders, by command of the Junta. [The exploits of Augustina, the famous heroine of both the sieges of Saragoza, are recorded at length in Southey's *History of the Peninsular War*. At the time when she first attracted notice, by mounting a battery where her lover had fallen, and working a gun in his room, she was in her twenty-second year, exceedingly pretty, and in a soft feminine style of beauty.]

Line 560. *The anlace hath espoused.* [*Anlace:* A short two-edged knife or dagger, broad at the hilt, and tapering to the point, formerly worn at the girdle. — *New Eng. Dict.*]

Page 13, line 594. *The seal Love's dimpling finger hath impress'd.* 'Sigilla in mento impressa Amoris digitulo Vestigio demonstrant mollitudinem.' — Aul. Gel.

Line 603. *Match me, ye climes which poets love to laud.* This stanza was written in Turkey. [The scene of the poem shifts abruptly for a few stanzas from Spain to Greece.]

Line 612. *Oh, thou Parnassus whom I now survey!* These stanzas were written in Castri (Delphi), at the foot of Parnassus. ['Upon Parnassus, going to the fountain of Delphi (Castri), in 1809, I saw a flight of twelve eagles (Hobhouse says they were vultures — at least in conversation), and I seized the omen. On the day before, I composed the lines to Parnassus (in *Childe Harold*), and on beholding the birds, had a hope that Apollo had accepted my homage. I have at least had the name and fame of a poet, during the poetical period of life (from twenty to thirty); — whether it will last is another matter: but I have been a votary of the deity and the place, and am grateful for what he has done in my behalf, leaving the future in his hands, as I left the past.' — *B. Diary*, 1821.]

Page 14, line 679. *Tread on each other's kibes.* [However loose he may be in construction, Byron is generally accurate in his use of words. But in several places he employs *kibes* (i. e. chilblains) for heels, being apparently misled by the passage in *Hamlet* (V. i. 150). In stanza lxix. he uses the expression *the seventh day*, really the Jewish Sabbath, for the Christian Sunday.]

Page 15, line 706. *Ask ye, Bœotian shades.* This was written at Thebes, and consequently in the best situation for asking and answering such a question.

Line 707. *'Tis to the worship of the solemn Horn.* [Lord Byron alludes to a ridiculous custom which formerly prevailed at the public-houses in Highgate, of administering a burlesque oath to all travelers of the middling rank who stopped there. The party was sworn on a pair of horns, fastened, 'never to kiss the maid when he could the mistress; never to eat brown bread when he could get white; never to drink small beer when he could get strong,' with many other injunctions of the like kind, — to all which was added the saving clause, — 'unless you like it best.']

Page 16, line 760. *With well-timed croupe.* The croupe [croupade] is a particular leap taught in the manège.

Page 17, line 817. *Full from the fount of Joy's delicious springs.*

> [Medio de fonte leporum
> Surgit amari aliquid quod in ipsis floribus angat.
> Lucretius, iv. 1133.]

Page 17. To Inez. [This song was written at Athens, January 25, 1810. In the original draught of the Canto the following stanzas stood in its place: —

Oh never talk again to me
  Of northern climes and British ladies;
It has not been your lot to see,
  Like me, the lovely girl of Cadiz.
Although her eye be not of blue
  Nor fair her locks, like English lasses,
How far its own expressive hue
  The languid azure eye surpasses!

Prometheus-like, from heaven she stole
  The fire, that through those silken lashes
In darkest glances seems to roll,
  From eyes that cannot hide their flashes:
And as along her bosom steal
  In lengthen'd flow her raven tresses,
You 'd swear each clustering lock could feel,
  And curl'd to give her neck caresses.

Our English maids are long to woo,
  And frigid even in possession;
And if their charms be fair to view,
  Their lips are slow at love's confession:
But, born beneath a brighter sun,
  For love ordain'd the Spanish maid is,
And who — when fondly, fairly won —
  Enchants you like the girl of Cadiz?

The Spanish maid is no coquette,
  Nor joys to see a lover tremble,
And if she love, or if she hate,
  Alike she knows not to dissemble.
Her heart can ne'er be bought or sold —
  Howe'er it beats, it beats sincerely;
And, though it will not bend to gold,
  'T will love you long and love you dearly.

The Spanish girl that meets your love
  Ne'er taunts you with a mock denial,
For every thought is bent to prove
  Her passion in the hour of trial.
When thronging foemen menace Spain,
  She dares the deed and shares the danger;
And should her lover press the plain,
  She hurls the spear, her love's avenger.

And when, beneath the evening star,
  She mingles in the gay bolero,
Or sings to her attuned guitar
  Of Christian knight or Moorish hero,
Or counts her beads with fairy hand
  Beneath the twinkling rays of Hesper,
Or joins Devotion's choral band,
  To chaunt the sweet and hallow'd vesper; —

In each her charms the heart must move
  Of all who venture to behold her;
Then let not maids less fair reprove
  Because her bosom is not colder:
Through many a clime 't is mine to roam
  Where many a soft and melting maid is,
But none abroad, and few at home,
  May match the dark-eyed girl of Cadiz.]

Page 18, line 879. *A traitor only fell beneath the feud.* Alluding to the conduct and death of Solano, the governor of Cadiz, in May, 1809. [He was ignominiously killed by the populace in 1808, for favoring Godoy and the French.]

Line 890. *War, war is still the cry, 'War even to the knife!'* 'War to the knife.' Pala fox's answer to the French general at the siege of Saragoza.

Line 899. *So may such foes deserve the most remorseless deed!* [The Canto in the original MS. closes with the following stanzas: —

Ye, who would more of Spain and Spaniards know,
Sights, Saints, Antiques, Arts, Anecdotes, and War,
Go! hie ye hence to Paternoster Row —
Are they not written in the Book of Carr,
Green Erin's Knight, and Europe's wandering star!
Then listen, Readers, to the Man of Ink,
Hear what he did, and sought, and wrote afar;
All these are coop'd within one Quarto's brink,
This borrow, steal, — don't buy, — and tell us what you think.

There may you read, with spectacles on eyes,
How many Wellesleys did embark for Spain,
As if therein they meant to colonize,
How many troops y-cross'd the laughing main
That ne'er beheld the said return again:
How many buildings are in such a place,
How many leagues from this to yonder plain,
How many relics each cathedral grace,
And where Giralda stands on her gigantic base.

There may you read (Oh, Phœbus, save Sir John!
That these my words prophetic may not err),
All that was said, or sung, or lost, or won,
By vaunting Wellesley or by blundering Frere,
He that wrote half the *Needy Knife-Grindĕr.*
Thus poesy the way to grandeur paves —
Who would not such diplomatists prefer?
But cease, my Muse, thy speed some respite craves;
Leave Legates to their house, and armies to their graves.

Yet here of Vulpes mention may be made,
Who for the Junta modell'd sapient laws,
Taught them to govern ere they were obey'd:
Certes, fit teacher to command, because
His soul Socratic no Xantippe awes;
Blest with a dame in Virtue's bosom nurst, —
With her let silent admiration pause! —
True to her second husband and her first:
On such unshaken fame let Satire do its worst.]

Page 19, line 927. *And thou, my friend, since unavailing woe.* The Honourable John Wingfield of the Guards, who died of a fever at Coimbra. I had known him ten years, the better half of his life, and the happiest part of mine. In the short space of one month I have lost *her* who gave me being, and most of those who had made that being tolerable. To me the lines of Young are no fiction: —

'Insatiate archer! could not one suffice?
Thy shaft flew thrice, and thrice my peace was slain,
And thrice ere thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn.'

[This and the following stanzas were added in August, 1811.]

Line 4. *And is, despite of war and wasting fire.* Part of the Acropolis was destroyed by the explosion of a magazine during the Venetian siege. [The desolation of the Athenian Acropolis affected Byron strongly, and he refers to it several times. Compare *The Curse of Minerva.*]

Line 19. *Son of the morning, rise! approach you here!* [Rolfe, in his note on this line, quotes as follows from Tozer: 'The poet supposes himself to be standing amid the ruins of the temple of Zeus Olympius by the Ilissus (10. 3) with the Acropolis full in view; in front of him lies a broken sepulchral urn, and not far off is a skull from some neighbouring burial-ground (5. 7); then, as he is proceeding to moralise on human vicissitude, he summons as audience a native (*Son of the morning*, i. e. an Oriental), who is supposed to be standing near. For a similar instance in Byron of summoning an audience, cf. *The Giaour:* —

"Approach, thou craven crouching slave:
Say, is not this Thermopylæ?" ']

Page 20, line 72. *The Bactrian, Samian sage, and all who taught the right!* [Zoroaster and Pythagoras. — In the original MS., for this stanza, we find what follows: —

Frown not upon me, churlish Priest! that I
Look not for life, where life may never be;
I am no sneerer at thy phantasy;
Thou pitiest me, — alas! I envy thee,
Thou bold discoverer in an unknown sea,
Of happy isles and happier tenants there;
I ask thee not to prove a Sadducee;
Still dream of Paradise thou know'st not where,
But lov'st too well to bid thine erring brother share.]

Line 81. *For me 't were bliss enough to know thy spirit blest!* [In a letter to Dallas, dated October 14, 1811, Byron says: 'I think it proper to state to you, that this stanza alludes to an event which has taken place since my arrival here (Newstead Abbey), and not to the death of any *male* friend.']

Page 21, line 84. *Here, son of Saturn, was thy fav'rite throne.* The temple of Jupiter Olympius, of which sixteen columns, entirely of marble, yet survive.

Line 91. *But who, of all the plunderers of yon fane.* [Byron refers to the marbles of the Parthenon taken to England by Lord Elgin, a Scotchman. Compare *The Curse of Minerva.*]

Line 117. *Which envious Eld forbore, and tyrants left to stand.* [After stanza xiii. the original MS. has the following: —

Come, then, ye classic Thanes of each degree,
Dark Hamilton and sullen Aberdeen,
Come pilfer all the Pilgrim loves to see,
All that yet consecrates the fading scene:
Oh! better were it ye had never been,
Nor ye, nor Elgin, nor that lesser wight,
The victim sad of vase-collecting spleen,
House-furnisher withal, one Thomas hight,
Than ye should bear one stone from wrong'd Athena's site.

Or will the gentle Dilettanti crew
Now delegate the task to digging Gell,
That mighty limner of a birds'-eye view,
How like to Nature let his volumes tell;
Who can with him the folio's limits swell
With all the Author saw, or said he saw?
Who can topographise or delve so well?
No boaster he, nor impudent and raw,
His pencil, pen, and shade, alike without a flaw.]

Line 118. *Where was thine Ægis, Pallas, that appall'd.* According to Zosimus, Minerva and Achilles frightened Alaric from the Acropolis:

but others relate that the Gothic king was nearly as mischievous as the Scottish peer.

Page 22, line 145. *The dark blue sea.* [These words occur a number of times in Byron and have the effect of an Homeric epithet.]

Line 155. *The well-reeved guns, the netted canopy.* To prevent blocks or splinters from falling on deck during action.

Line 190. *Through Calpe's straits survey the steepy shore.* [*Calpe*, the Greek name of Gibraltar.]

Page 23, line 253. *But not in silence pass Calypso's isles.* Goza is said to have been the island of Calypso. [Goza is near Malta. The real island, Ogygia, of the *Odyssey*, is of course mythical. In the *Télémaque* of Fénelon, Mentor and Telemachus visit the island, and Mentor pushes the youth from a cliff into the sea to save him from the seductive charms of Calypso, who was thus bereft of both Odysseus and his son.]

Page 24, line 266. *Sweet Florence, could another ever share.* [Mrs. Spencer Smith, whose acquaintance the poet formed at Malta, — see Miscellaneous Poems, September, 1809, *To Florence*, p. 157. 'In one so imaginative as Lord Byron, who, while he infused so much of his life into his poetry, mingled also not a little of poetry with his life, it is difficult,' says Moore, 'in unravelling the texture of his feelings, to distinguish at all times between the fanciful and the real. His description *here*, for instance, of the unmoved and "loveless heart," with which he contemplated even the charms of this attractive person, is wholly at variance with the statements in many of his letters; and, above all, with one of the most graceful of his lesser poems, addressed to this same lady, during a thunderstorm on his road to Zitza.']

Line 291. *Was not unskilful in the spoiler's art.* [It is common to quote in extenuation of this line Byron's statement to Dallas in 1821: 'I am not a Joseph, nor a Scipio, but I can safely affirm, that I never in my life seduced any woman.']

Line 307. *'Tis an old lesson; Time approves it true.* [It is interesting to compare with this stanza Shakespeare's Sonnet 129, 'The expense of spirit in a waste of shame.']

Page 25, line 334. *Land of Albania, where Iskander rose.* [Iskander is the Turkish word for Alexander; and the celebrated Scanderbeg (Lord Alexander) is alluded to in the third and fourth lines of the stanza.]

Line 344. *Where sad Penelope o'erlook'd the wave.* Ithaca. [The lover's refuge is the rock of Leucadia from which Sappho is fabled to have thrown herself. Sappho is called dark in accordance with the description of Ovid, *Candida si non sum* (*Her.* xv. 35).]

Page 26, line 397. *Ambracia's gulf behold.* [Here was fought the battle of Actium where Mark Antony lost the world to follow Cleopatra. Nicopolis was built by Augustus opposite to Actium as a trophy of the victory.]

Line 415. *Acherusia's lake.* According to Pouqueville, the lake of Yanina: but Pouqueville is always out. [The lake of Yanina, or Janina, is not the Acherusian lake. — The primal city is Yanina. — Albania's chief is Ali Pacha.]

Line 424. *Monastic Zitza.* The convent and village of Zitza are four hours' journey from Joannina, or Yanina, the capital of the Pachalick. In the valley the river Kalamas (once the Acheron) flows, and, not far from Zitza, forms a fine cataract. The situation is perhaps the finest in Greece.

Page 27, line 438. *Here dwells the caloyer.* The Greek monks are so called. [καλόγερος, good old man.]

Line 488. *Laos wide and fierce.* [A mistake for Aous, the modern Viosa.]

Page 28, line 498. *Survey'd the dwelling of this chief of power.* ['He (Ali Pacha) had heard that an Englishman of rank was in his dominions, and left orders in Yanina, with the commandant, to provide a house, and supply me with every kind of necessary, *gratis*. . . . I rode out on the vizier's horses, and saw the palaces of himself and grandsons. . . . I shall never forget the singular scene on entering Tepaleen, at five in the afternoon, as the sun was going down. It brought to my mind (with some change of *dress*, however) Scott's description of Branksome Castle in his *Lay*, and the feudal system. The Albanians in their dresses (the most magnificent in the world, consisting of a long white kilt, gold-worked cloak, crimson velvet gold-laced jacket and waistcoat, silver-mounted pistols and daggers); the Tartars, with their high caps; the Turks in their vast pelisses and turbans; the soldiers and black slaves with the horses, the former in groups, in an immense large open gallery in front of the palace, the latter placed in a kind of cloister below it; two hundred steeds ready caparisoned to move in a moment; couriers entering or passing out with despatches; the kettle-drums beating; boys calling the hour from the minaret of the mosque; altogether, with the singular appearance of the building itself, formed a new and delightful spectacle to a stranger.' — Byron in a letter to his mother, November 12, 1809.]

Line 532. *Ramazani's fast.* [The Turkish lent. Compare FitzGerald's stanza in the *Rubaiyat*: —

> 'As under cover of departing Day
> Slunk hunger-stricken Ramazan away.']

Page 29, line 593. *And fellow-countrymen have stood aloof.* Alluding to the wreckers of Cornwall.

Page 30, line 632. *The red wine circling fast.* The Albanian Mussulmans do not abstain from wine, and, indeed, very few of the others.

Line 637. *Each Palikar.* 'Palikar,' a soldier.

Line 649. *Tambourgi.* A drummer. — These stanzas are partly taken from different Albanese songs, as far as I was able to make them out by the exposition of the Albanese in Romaic and Italian.

Page 31, line 686. *Let the yellow-hair'd Giaours.* Yellow is the epithet given to the Russians. — *Horsetail*, the insignia of a Pacha. — *Delhis* horsemen, answering to our forlorn hope. — *Selictar*, sword-bearer.

Line 702. *Spirit of freedom! when on Phyle's brow.* Phyle, which commands a beautiful view of Athens, has still considerable remains; it was seized by Thrasybulus, previous to the expulsion of the Thirty.

Line 729. *The city won for Allah from the Giaour.* [Constantinople. It was taken by the Franks in the crusade of 1204. — Wahab (d. 1787) introduced a stricter observance of the faith; his followers captured Mecca and Medina.]

Page 33, line 810. *Save where some solitary column mourns.* Of Mount Pentelicus, from whence the marble was dug that constructed the public edifices of Athens. The modern name is Mount Mendeli. An immense cave formed by the quarries still remains, and will, till the end of time.

Line 812. *Save where Tritonia's airy shrine.* [The temple of Athena on Cape Sunium, or Colonna.]

Line 843. *When Marathon became a magic word.* 'Siste Viator — heroa calcas!' was the epitaph on the famous Count Merci; — what then must be our feelings when standing on the tumulus of the two hundred (Greeks) who fell on Marathon? The principal barrow has recently been opened by Fauvel; few or no relics, as vases, etc., were found by the excavator. The plain of Marathon was offered to me for sale at the sum of sixteen thousand piastres, about nine hundred pounds! Alas! — 'Expende, — quot *libras* in duce summo — invenies!' — was the dust of Miltiades worth no more? It could scarcely have fetched less if sold by *weight.*

Page 34, line 872. *Or gazing o'er the plains where Greek and Persian died.* [The original MS. closes with this stanza. The rest was added while the canto was passing through the press.]

Line 891. *Thou too art gone.* [See note to stanza ix, page 20.]

Page 38, line 158. *In 'pride of place' here last the eagle flew.* 'Pride of place' is a term of falconry, and means the highest pitch of flight. See *Macbeth:* —

> 'An eagle towering in his pride of place.'

[Byron quotes from memory, and, as often, not quite correctly.]

Line 180. *Such as Harmodius drew on Athens' tyrant lord.* [Harmodius and Aristogiton delivered Athens from the tyranny of Hippias and Hipparchus, the sons of Pisistratus. A famous skolion, or banquet-song, celebrated the slaying of Hipparchus. The first stanza is thus translated by Denman: —

> 'I 'll wreathe my sword in myrtle bough,
> The sword that laid the tyrant low,
> When patriots, burning to be free,
> To Athens gave equality.']

Line 181. *There was a sound of revelry by night.* [The Duchess of Richmond's ball, June 15, 1815, the evening before Waterloo. The superb use of contrast in these stanzas can only be paralleled in the corresponding scene of *Vanity Fair.*]

Line 200. *Brunswick's fated chieftain.* [The father of the Duke of Brunswick, who fell at Quatre-Bras, received his death-wound at Jena.]

Page 39, line 234. *And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears!* Sir Evan Cameron, and his descendant Donald, the 'gentle Lochiel' [of Campbell's ballad] of the 'forty-five.'

Line 235. *And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves.* The wood of Soignies is supposed to be a remnant of the 'forest of Ardennes,' famous in Boiardo's *Orlando*, and immortal in Shakspeare's *As you like it.* It is also celebrated in Tacitus as being the spot of successful defence by the Germans against the Roman encroachments. I have ventured to adopt the name connected with nobler associations than those of mere slaughter.

Line 261. *Young, gallant Howard.* [Byron had written against his father, the Earl of Carlisle, in *English Bards.*]

Page 40, line 270. *I turn'd from all she brought.* My guide from Mont St. Jean over the field seemed intelligent and accurate. The place where Major Howard fell was not far from two tall and solitary trees (there was a third cut down, or shivered in the battle) which stand a few yards from each other at a pathway's side. Beneath these he died and was buried. The body has since been removed to England. A small hollow for the present marks where it lay, but will probably soon be effaced; the plough has been upon it, and the grain is.

Line 303. *Like to the apples on the Dead Sea's shore.* The (fabled) apples on the brink of the lake Asphaltes were said to be fair without, and within ashes. — Vide Tacitus, *Histor.* v. 7.

Page 41, line 369. *For sceptred cynics earth were far too wide a den.* The great error of Napoleon, 'if we have writ our annals true,' was a continued obtrusion on mankind of his want of all community of feeling for or with them; perhaps more offensive to human vanity than the active cruelty of more trembling and suspicious tyranny. Such were his speeches to public assemblies as well as individuals; and the single expression which he is said to have used on returning to Paris after the Russian winter had destroyed his army, rubbing his hands over a fire, 'This is pleasanter than Moscow,' would probably alienate more favour from his cause than the destruction and reverses which led to the remark.

Page 42, line 429. *What want these outlaws conquerors should have.*

> 'What wants that knave
> That a king should have?'

was King James's question on meeting Johnny Armstrong and his followers in full accoutrements. [See *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Cambridge Ed. p. 417.]

Page 43, line 496. *The castled crag of Drachenfels.* [These verses were written on the banks of the Rhine in May, 1816. They are addressed to his half-sister.]

Page 44, line 537. *There is a small and simple pyramid.* The monument of the young and lamented General Marceau (killed by a rifle-ball at Alterkirchen on the last day of the fourth year of the French republic) still remains as described. The inscriptions on his monument are rather too long, and not required; his name was enough; France adored, and her enemies admired; both wept over him. His funeral was attended by the generals and detachments from both armies. In the same grave General Hoche is interred.

Page 45, line 601. *Morat! the proud, the patriot field!* [Here in 1476 the Swiss defeated the Duke of Burgundy with great slaughter. Byron found there a small pyramid of bones only, the mortuary chapel, which had contained them, having been destroyed in 1798.]

Line 625. *Levell'd Aventicum.* Aventicum, near Morat, was the Roman capital of Helvetia, where Avenches now stands. [A solitary Corinthian column, the remnant of a temple of Apollo, stands near the town.]

Line 627. *Julia, the daughter, the devoted.* Julia Alpinula, a young Aventian priestess, died soon after a vain endeavour to save her father, condemned to death as a traitor by Aulus Cæcina. Her epitaph was discovered many years ago; — it is thus: 'Julia Alpinula: Hic jaceo. Infelicis patris infelix proles. Deæ Aventiæ Sacerdos. Exorare patris necem non potui: Male mori in fatis ille erat. Vixi annos XXIII.' I know of no human composition so affecting as this, nor a history of deeper interest. These are the names and actions which ought not to perish, and to which we turn with a true and healthy tenderness, from the wretched and glittering detail of a confused mass of conquests and battles, with which the mind is roused for a time to a false and feverish sympathy, from whence it recurs at length with all the nausea consequent on such intoxication. [It must be added that the inscription is really a forgery of a certain Paulus Guilelmus of the sixteenth century.]

Line 642. *Like yonder Alpine snow.* This is written in the eye of Mont Blanc (June 3, 1816), which even at this distance dazzles mine. — (July 20th.) I this day observed for some time the distinct reflection of Mont Blanc and Mont Argentière in the calm of the lake, while I was crossing in my boat; the distance of these mountains from their mirror is sixty miles.

Page 46, line 673. *By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone.* The colour of the Rhone at Geneva is blue, to a depth of tint which I have never seen equalled in water, salt or fresh, except in the Mediterranean and Archipelago.

Lines 693, 694. *Remount at last with a fresh pinion.* [Compare the similar metaphor in Plato's *Phædrus*; also Horace, *Od.* iii. 2, 24 and ii. 20, 9.]

Page 47, line 725. *Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau.* ['I have traversed all Rousseau's ground with the *Héloïse* before me, and am struck to a degree, with the force and accuracy of his descriptions, and the beauty of their reality. Meillerie, Clarens, and Vevay, and the Château de Chillon, are places of which I shall say little; because all I could say must fall short of the impressions they stamp.' — B. Letter to Murray, June 27, 1816. This whole passage is a masterpiece of psychological criticism.]

Line 743. This *breathed itself to life in Julie.* [The heroine of Rousseau's *Héloïse.*]

Line 745. *The memorable kiss.* This refers to the account in his *Confessions* of his passion for the Comtesse d'Houdetot (the mistress of St. Lambert), and his long walk every morning, for the sake of the single kiss which was the common salutation of French acquaintance.

Page 49, line 860. *The sky is changed! — and such a change!* The thunder-storm to which these lines refer occurred on the 13th of June, 1816, at midnight. I have seen, among the Acroceraunian mountains of Chimari, several more terrible, but none more beautiful.

Line 878. *Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way.* [The simile is taken from Coleridge's *Christabel*, ii. 408 ss.]

Page 50, line 923. *Clarens, birthplace of deep Love!* It would be difficult to see Clarens (with the scenes around it, Vevay, Chillon, Boveret, St. Gingo, Meillerie, Eivan, and the entrances of the Rhone), without being forcibly struck with its peculiar adaptation to the persons and events with which it has been peopled. But this is not all: the feeling with which all around Clarens, and the opposite rocks of Meillerie, is invested, is of a still higher and more comprehensive order than the mere sympathy with individual passion; it is a sense of the existence of love in its most extended and sublime capacity, and of our own participation of its good and of its glory: it is the great principle of the universe, which is there more condensed, but not less manifested; and of which, though knowing ourselves a part, we lose our individuality, and mingle in the beauty of the whole. If Rousseau had never written, nor lived, the same associations would not less have belonged to such scenes. He has added to the interest of his works by their adoption; he has shown his sense of their beauty by the selection; but they have done that for him which no human being could do for them. [Byron's note quotes at length from Rousseau, *Héloïse*, Part iv. Lettre 17, and *Les Confessions*, iv. p. 306.]

Page 51, line 959. *He who hath loved not, here would learn that lore.* [Compare the refrain of the *Pervigilium Veneris:* Cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet.]

Line 978. *Of names which unto you bequeath'd a name.* Voltaire and Gibbon.

Page 52, line 1057. *Had I not filed my mind.* [Defiled. Compare *Macbeth*, III. i. 64.]

Page 53, line 1064. *O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve.* It is said by Rochefoucault, that there is always something in the misfortunes of men's best friends not displeasing to them.

Page 55, line 1. *I stood in Venice on the Bridge of Sighs.* The communication between the ducal palace and the prisons of Venice is by a gloomy bridge, or covered gallery, high above the water.

Line 10. *She looks a sea Cybele.* [Byron notes that the metaphor is drawn from Sabellicus. Cybele (properly accented on the first syllable) was regularly pictured with a tiara of towers.]

Line 19. *In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more.* The well-known song of the gondoliers, of alternate stanzas from Tasso's *Jerusalem*, has died with the independence of Venice. Editions of the poem, with the original on one column, and the Venetian variations on the other, as sung by the boatmen, were once common, and are still to be found.

Page 56, line 57. *Are now but so.* [Are now but dreams.]

Line 86. '*Sparta hath many a worthier son than he.*' The answer of the mother of Brasidas, the Lacedæmonian general, to the strangers who praised the memory of her son.

Line 93. *The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored.* [The famous galley from which the Doge every year dropped a ring into the sea, with the words: 'We wed thee with this ring in token of our true and perpetual sovereignty.' The Bucentaur was finally burned by the French in 1797.]

Line 95. *St. Mark yet sees his lion.* [The winged Lion of St. Mark stands on a column overlooking the Piazzo di San Marco. Here in 1177 the Suabian Emperor Babarossa submitted to Pope Alexander III.]

Page 57, line 106. *Like lauwine.* [German for avalanche.]

Line 107. *Oh, for one hour of blind old Dandolo.* The reader will recollect the exclamation of the highlander, *Oh for one hour of Dundee!* Henry Dandolo, when elected Doge, in 1192, was eighty-five years of age. When he commanded the Venetians at the taking of Constantinople, he was consequently ninety-seven years old. At this age he annexed the fourth and a half of the whole empire of Romania, for so the Roman empire was then called, to the title and to the territories of the Venetian Doge.

Line 111. *But is not Doria's menace come to pass?* [After the loss of the battle of Pola, and the taking of Chioggia in 1379, the Venetians sued for peace and received this reply from Peter Doria, the Genoese commander: 'On God's faith, gentlemen of Venice, ye shall have no peace from the Signor of Padua, nor from our commune of Genoa, until we have first put a rein upon those unbridled horses of yours, that are upon the porch of your evangelist St. Mark. When we have bridled them, we shall keep you quiet.']

Line 120. *The 'Planter of the Lion.'* That is, the Lion of St. Mark, the standard of the republic, which is the origin of the word Pantaloon — Piantaleone, Pantaleon, Pantaloon. [This etymology is of course purely fantastic.]

Line 138. *Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse.* The story is told in Plutarch's *Life of Nicias*. [Some of the prisoners, it is stated, won the good will of their masters by reciting Euripides to them.]

Page 58, line 158. *And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakspeare's art.* [Byron names in a note] *Venice Preserved; Mysteries of Udolpho; The Ghost Seer, or Armenian; The Merchant of Venice; Othello.*

Line 172. *Will the tannen grow.* [German for firs.]

Page 59, line 243. *An island of the blest!* The above description may seem fantastical or exaggerated to those who have never seen an Oriental or Italian sky, yet is but a literal and hardly sufficient delineation of an August evening (the eighteenth), as contemplated in one of many rides along the banks of the Brenta, near La Mira.

Line 262. *There is a tomb in Arqua.* [Petrarch spent the last years of his life in the village of Arqua, and was buried there.]

Page 60, line 298. *Or, it may be, with demons.* The struggle is to the full as likely to be with demons as with our better thoughts. Satan chose the wilderness for the temptation of our Saviour. And our unsullied John Locke preferred the presence of a child to complete solitude.

Line 307. *Ferrara.* [The seat of the house of Este. It is a common tradition that Tasso was imprisoned as a madman by Alfonso II. because of the poet's unfortunate love for the duke's sister. — Tasso's works were severely criticised by the Florentine *Accademia della Crusca*, and by Boileau. Byron quotes, in a note, and comments on a couplet of Boileau's: —

> A Malherbe, à Racan, préfère Théophile,
> Et le clinquant du Tasse à tout l'or de Virgile.]

Page 61, line 354. *The Bards of Hell and Chivalry.* [Dante and Ariosto. — The last line of the stanza is from the opening line of the *Orlando*.]

Line 361. *The lightning rent from Ariosto's bust.* Before the remains of Ariosto were removed from the Benedictine church to the library of Ferrara, his bust, which surmounted the tomb, was struck by lightning, and a crown of iron laurels melted away. [The laurel was deemed safe from lightning by the ancients.]

Line 387. *Victor or vanquish'd, thou the slave of friend or foe.* The two stanzas xlii. and xliii. are, with the exception of a line or two, a translation of the famous sonnet of Filicaja: —

> Italia, Italia, O tu cui feo la sorte!

Line 388. *Wandering in youth, I traced the path of him.* The celebrated letter of Servius Sulpicius to Cicero on the death of his daughter describes as it then was, and now is, a path which I often traced in Greece, both by sea and land, in different journeys and voyages. 'On my return from Asia, as I was sailing from Ægina towards Megara, I began to contemplate the prospect of the countries around me: Ægina was behind, Megara before me; Piræus on the right, Corinth on the left; all which towns, once famous and flourishing, now lie overturned and buried in their ruins. Upon this sight, I could not but think presently within myself, Alas! how do we poor mortals fret and vex ourselves if any of our friends happen to die or to be killed, whose life is yet so short, when the carcasses of so many noble cities lie here exposed before me in one view.' —See Middleton's *Cicero*, ii. 371.

Page 62, line 413. *The skeleton of her Titanic form.* It is Poggio who, looking from the Capitoline hill upon ruined Rome, breaks forth into the exclamation, 'Ut nunc omni decore nudata, prostrata jacet, instar gigantei cadaveris corrupti atque undique exesi.'

Line 433. *There, too, the Goddess loves in stone.* [The Venus de' Medici.]

Line 454. *Thy own vanquish'd Lord of War.* [The scene is an imitation of *Lucretius*, i. 33 ss.]

Page 63, line 505. *Dante sleeps afar.* [Dante was buried in Ravenna.] The elder Scipio Africanus had a tomb if he was not buried at Liternum, whither he had retired to voluntary banishment.

Lines 510, 511. *The crown Which Petrarch's laureat brow supremely wore.* [He was crowned with the laurel-wreath at Rome in 1341. His grave was rifled in 1630.]

Lines 514, 515. *Boccaccio to his parent earth bequeath'd His dust.* Boccaccio was buried in the church of St. Michael and St. James, at Certaldo, a small town in the Valdelsa, which was by some supposed the place of his birth. There he passed the latter part of his life in a course of laborious study, which shortened his existence, and there might his ashes have been secure, if not of honour, at least of repose. But the 'hyæna bigots' of Certaldo tore up the tombstone of Boccaccio, and ejected it from the holy precincts of St. Michael and St. James.

Page 64, line 525. *Cæsar's pageant, shorn of Brutus' bust.* [The busts of Brutus and Cassius were not carried in the funeral procession of Junia, who was the sister of the former and wife of the latter. 'They were conspicuous by their absence.' — TACITUS, *Ann.* iii. 76.]

Line 551. *Thrasimene's lake.* [Lake Trasimenus. Here in 217 B. C. the Romans were overwhelmed by Hannibal. The incident of the earthquake is recorded by Livy.]

Page 65, line 586. *But thou, Clitumnus.* [A river of Umbria springing from a rock, where stands a temple to the god Clitumnus.]

Line 590. *The milk-white steer.* [Compare Virgil, *Geor.* ii. 146: Hinc albi, Clitumne, greges.]

Page 66, line 653. *The thundering lauwine.* In the greater part of Switzerland, the avalanches are known by the name of lauwine.

Line 665. *The lone Soracte's height.* [A mountain visible from the city of Rome. Horace (*Od.* i. 9) speaks of it as standing white with deep snow.]

Line 707. *The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now.* [The tomb of the Scipios was discovered and rifled in 1780.]

Page 67, line 731. *The trebly hundred triumphs!* Orosius gives 320 for the number of triumphs. He is followed by Panvinius; and Panvinius by Mr. Gibbon and the modern writers.

Line 740. *Triumphant Sylla!* [In 86 B. C. Cinna and Marius, his enemies, were appointed Consuls, but Sulla brought his eastern campaign to a close before returning to Rome. In 79 B. C. he resigned the dictatorship.]

Line 764. *His day of double victory and death.* On the third of September, Cromwell gained the victory of Dunbar; a year afterwards he obtained 'his crowning mercy' of Worcester; and a few years after, on the same day, which he had ever esteemed the most fortunate for him, died.

Page 68, line 784. *The thunder-stricken nurse of Rome!* [The bronze statue of the wolf which nursed Romulus and Remus was according to Cicero struck by lightning. The present statue is of doubtful origin.]

Line 809. *Alcides with the distaff.* [Hercules, who spun wool for Omphale while serving her as a slave.]

Page 69, line 883. *There is a stern round tower of other days.* Alluding to the tomb of Cecilia Metella, called Capo di Bove, in the Appian Way. [The tomb was built in honor of the daughter of Metellus Creticus (not Cecilia Metella), and daughter-in-law of Crassus, the richest of the Romans. In the Middle Ages the tomb was used as a fortress.]

Page 71, line 990. *To crush the imperial urn.* The column of Trajan is surmounted by St. Peter; that of Aurelius by St. Paul.

Page 72, line 1036. *The mosses of thy fountain still are sprinkled.* [The grotto where tradition locates the secret meetings of Numa and Egeria, is on the Appian Way not far from Rome. The ruined shrine is in reality of rather a late period.]

Page 74, line 1181. *Left the unbalanced scale.* [Grammar requires *left'st*.]

Page 75, line 1224. *Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.* [Between stanzas cxxxv. and cxxxvi. we find in the original MS. the following: —

> If to forgive be heaping coals of fire —
> As God hath spoken — on the heads of foes,
> Mine should be a volcano, and rise higher
> Than, o'er the Titans crush'd, Olympus rose,
> Or Athos soars, or blazing Etna glows: —
> True, they who stung were creeping things; but what
> Than serpents' teeth inflicts with deadlier throes?
> The Lion may be goaded by the Gnat. —
> Who sucks the slumberer's blood? — The Eagle? — No: the Bat.]

Page 76, line 1252. *I see before me the Gladiator lie.* [The well-known statue, now taken to be a dying Gaul.]

Line 1293. *Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head.* Suetonius informs us that Julius Cæsar was particularly gratified by that decree of the senate which enabled him to wear a wreath of laurel on all occasions. He was anxious, not to show that he was the conqueror of the world, but to hide that he was bald. A stranger at Rome would hardly have guessed at the motive, nor should we without the help of the historian.

Line 1297. *While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand.* This is quoted in the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, as a proof that the Coliseum was entire when seen by the Anglo-Saxon pilgrims at the end of the seventh, or the beginning of the eighth century.

Page 77, line 1324. *There is a dungeon.* This and the three next stanzas allude to the story of the Roman daughter, which is recalled to the traveller by the site, or pretended site, of that adventure, now shown at the church of St. Nicholas in *Carcere*. [The story is related by Festus (*De Verb. Sign.* xx.) and others.]

Page 78, line 1360. *The Mole which Hadrian rear'd.* The castle of St. Angelo.

Line 1369. *The vast and wondrous dome.* The church of St. Peter's. [Diana's marvel is the temple of Diana at Ephesus.]

Page 80, line 1495. *Hark! forth from the abyss a voice proceeds.* [The six following stanzas refer to the death of the Princess Charlotte, the only daughter of George IV. She died in childbirth November 6, 1817, universally lamented.]

Lines 1536, 1537. *The strange fate Which tumbles mightiest sovereigns.* Mary died on the scaffold; Elizabeth of a broken heart; Charles V. a hermit; Louis XIV. a bankrupt in means and glory; Cromwell of anxiety; and, 'the greatest is behind,' Napoleon lives a prisoner. To these sovereigns a long but superfluous list might be added of names equally illustrious and unhappy.

Page 81, line 1549. *Lo, Nemi! navell'd in the woody hills.* The village of Nemi was near the Arician retreat of Egeria, and from the shades which embosomed the temple of Diana, has preserved to this day its distinctive appellation of *The Grove.*

Line 1566. *The Sabine farm.* [The retreat of Horace.]

Page 82, line 1620. *There let him lay.* [This use of *lay* has caused considerable comment. Byron, whether carelessly or intentionally, employs *lay* several times in his poems as an intransitive verb. He might find authority for this confusion of *lie* and *lay* in writers of the Middle English period; but it must be confessed that no great poet of the language is so careless of his grammar as Byron.]

Page 86, line 11. *John of Horistan.* Horistan Castle, in *Derbyshire*, an ancient seat of the Byron family. [There is no record of any of Lord Byron's ancestors having engaged in the Holy Wars.]

Page 86. Letters to an Italian Nun, etc. [' A second edition of this work was published in London, in 1784. It is, probably, a literary forgery.' — *Note by E. H. Coleridge.*]

Page 93. To the Duke of Dorset. [George John Frederick, fourth Duke of Dorset.]

Page 94, line 68. *And call'd, proud boast! the British drama forth.* [' Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, was born in 1527. While a student of the Inner Temple, he wrote his tragedy of *Gorboduc*, which was played before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall, in 1561.' — Campbell.]

Line 69. *Another view, not less renown'd for wit.* Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset, was born in 1637, and died in 1706. He was esteemed the most accomplished man of his day, and alike distinguished in the voluptuous court of Charles II. and the gloomy one of William III.

Page 95, line 1. *Le Sage's demon's gift.* The *Diable Boiteux* of Le Sage, where Asmodeus, the demon, places Don Cleofas on an elevated situation, and unroofs the houses for inspection.

Line 67. *A numerous crowd, array'd in white.* On a saint's day the students wear surplices in chapel.

Page 96, line 20. *Mossop himself was outshone.* [Henry] Mossop, a contemporary of Garrick, famous for his performance of Zanga [in Young's *The Revenge.*]

Page 102, line 42. *The pibroch raised its piercing note.* [The pibroch is properly the tune, not the instrument.]

Page 104, line 220. *Thy Beltane yet may burn.* Beltane Tree, a Highland festival on the first of May, held near fires lighted for the occasion.

Page 111, line 2. *Magnus.* No reflection is here intended against the person mentioned under the name of Magnus. He is merely represented as performing an unavoidable function of his office. [Dr. William Mansel was, in 1798, appointed to the headship of Trinity College, by Mr. Pitt.]

Page 117, line 25. *Ill-starr'd, though brave.* I allude here to my maternal ancestors, 'the *Gordons*,' many of whom fought for the unfortunate Prince Charles, better known by the name of the Pretender. This branch was nearly allied by blood, as well as attachment, to the Stuarts.

Page 118, line 1. *Becher.* [The Rev. John Becher, prebendary of Southwell, in whom the youthful poet found not only an honest and judicious critic, but a sincere friend. To his care the superintendence of the second edition of *Hours of Idleness*, during its progress through a country press, was intrusted.]

Page 119, line 2. *Repentant Henry's pride!* Henry II. founded Newstead soon after the murder of Thomas à Becket.

Line 10. *The crimson cross demand.* The badge of the crusaders.

Page 120, line 43. *Another Henry the kind gift recalls.* At the dissolution of the monasteries, Henry VIII. bestowed Newstead Abbey on Sir John Byron.

Line 57. *A regal fortress now.* Newstead sustained a considerable siege in the war between Charles I. and his parliament.

Line 73. *She snatch'd him from th' unequal strife.* Lord Byron, and his brother Sir William, held high commands in the royal army. The former was general in chief in Ireland, lieutenant of the Tower, and governor to James, Duke of York, afterwards the unhappy James II.; the latter had a principal share in many actions.

Line 76. *Where godlike Falkland fell.* Lucius Carey, Viscount Falkland, the most accomplished man of his age, was killed at the battle of Newbury, charging in the ranks of Lord Byron's regiment of cavalry.

Page 121, line 108. *Loathing the offering of so dark a death.* This is an historical fact. A violent tempest occurred immediately subsequent to the death or interment of Cromwell, which occasioned many disputes between his partisans and the cavaliers: both interpreted the circumstance into divine interposition.

Page 123, line 90. *Pomposus.* [See the poem *On a Change of Masters.* Page 93.]

Page 125, line 243. *Alonzo.* [John Wingfield, who died at Coimbra, in 1811.]

Line 266. *Davus.* [The Rev. John Cecil Tattersall, who died in 1812.]

Page 126, line 274. *The rustic's musket aim'd against my life.* [The 'factious strife' here recorded was accidentally brought on by the breaking up of school, and the dismissal of some volunteers from drill, both happening at the same hour. On this occasion, it appears, the butt-end of a musket was aimed at Byron's head, and would have felled him to the ground, but for the interposition of Tattersall.]

Line 287. *Lycus.* [John Fitzgibbon, second Earl of Clare. His father, whom he succeeded Jan. 28, 1802, was for nearly twelve years Lord Chancellor of Ireland.]

Line 301. *Euryalus.* [George John, fifth Earl of Delawarr.]

Line 326. *Cleon.* [Edward Noel Long, Esq.]

Page 127, line 351. *When my first harangue received applause.* ['My qualities were much more oratorical than poetical, and Dr. Drury, my grand patron, had a notion that I should turn out an orator from my fluency, my turbulence, my voice, my copiousness of declamation, and my action.' — *Byron Diary.*]

Page 132, line 41. *Seat of my youth!* [Harrow.]

Line 51 *Lycus.* [The Earl of Clare.]

Page 133. To Edward Noel Long. [This young gentleman, who was with Lord Byron both at Harrow and Cambridge, afterwards entered the Guards, and served with distinction in the expedition to Copenhagen. He was drowned early in 1809, when on his way to join the army in the Peninsula; the transport in which he sailed being run foul of in the night by another of the convoy. 'Long's father,' says Lord Byron, 'wrote to me to write his son's epitaph. I promised — but I had not the heart to complete it. He was such a good, amiable being as rarely remains long in this world; with talent and accomplishments, too, to make him the more regretted.' — *Byron Diary*, 1821.]

Page 137, line 43. *Poor* LITTLE*! sweet, melodious bard!* These stanzas were written soon after the appearance of a severe critique, in a northern review, on a new publication of the British Anacreon. [Thomas Little, the pen name of Moore.]

Page 138. Lines written beneath an Elm in the Churchyard of Harrow. [On losing his natural daughter, Allegra, in April, 1822, Lord Byron sent her remains to be buried at Harrow, 'where,' he says in a letter to Murray, April 22, 'I once hoped to have laid my own.' 'There is,' he adds, in a later letter, May 26, 'a spot in the *church-yard*, near the footpath, on the brow of the hill looking towards Windsor, and a tomb under a large tree (bearing the name of Peachie, or Peachey), where I used to sit for hours and hours when a boy; this was my favourite spot; but as I wish to erect a tablet to her memory, the body had better be deposited in the *church;*' — and it was so deposited accordingly.]

Page 141. To a Knot of Ungenerous Critics. ['There can be little doubt that these verses were called forth by the criticisms passed on the *Fugitive Pieces* by certain ladies of Southwell.' — E. H. Coleridge.]

Page 142, line 32. *Wilmot's verse.* [*Poems* published by John Wilmot in 1680.]

Page 144, line 5. *I've lived, as many other men live.* [Murray prints: 'I've lived, as many others live.' — Apparently a misprint, as the rhyme demands the change here made.]

Page 145, line 41. *Fields, which surround yon rustic cot.* [Mrs. Pigot's Cottage.]

Page 146, line 55. *Mary.* [Mary Duff, or, according to E. H. Coleridge, Mary Chaworth.]

Line 61. *And thou, my Friend!* [See the verses on *The Cornelian*, page 113.]

Page 149. To an Oak at Newstead. [Lord Byron, on his first arrival at Newstead, in 1798, planted an oak in the garden, and nourished the fancy, that as the tree flourished so should he. On revisiting the abbey, during Lord Grey de Ruthven's residence there, he found the oak choked up by weeds, and almost destroyed; — hence these lines. Shortly after Colonel Wildman took possession, he one day noticed it, and said to the servant who was with him, 'Here is a fine young oak; but it must be cut down, as it grows in an improper place.' — 'I hope not, sir,' replied the man; 'for it's the one that my lord was so fond of, because he set it himself.']

Page 150. On Revisiting Harrow. Some years ago, when at Harrow, a friend of the author engraved on a particular spot the names of both, with a few additional words, as a memorial. Afterwards, on receiving some real or imagined injury, the author destroyed the frail record before he left Harrow. On revisiting the place in 1807, he wrote under it these stanzas.

Page 150. *To charm her ear while some remains.* [So printed in Murray. 'Some' would appear to be a wrong reading for 'sense.']

Page 151. To Harriet. [The Harriet Maltby of the poem entitled *To Marion.* Page 100.]

Page 154. Inscription on the Monument of a Newfoundland Dog. [This monument is still a conspicuous ornament in the garden of Newstead. The following is the inscription by which the verses are preceded: —

Near this spot
Are deposited the Remains of one
Who possessed Beauty without Vanity,
Strength without Insolence,

Courage without Ferocity,
And all the Virtues of Man without his Vices.
This Praise, which would be unmeaning Flattery
If inscribed over human ashes,
Is but a just tribute to the Memory of
BOATSWAIN, a Dog,
Who was born at Newfoundland, May, 1803,
And died at Newstead Abbey, Nov. 18, 1808.]

Page 157, line 49. *Fletcher! Murray! Bob!* [Byron's three servants.]

Page 160. WRITTEN AFTER SWIMMING FROM SESTOS TO ABYDOS. On the 3d of May, 1810, while the Salsette (Captain Bathurst) was lying in the Dardanelles, Lieutenant Ekenhead of that frigate and the writer of these rhymes swam from the European shore to the Asiatic — by the by, from Abydos to Sestos would have been more correct. The whole distance from the place whence we started to our landing on the other side, including the length we were carried by the current, was computed by those on board the frigate at upwards of four English miles; though the actual breadth is barely one.

Page 160. *Maid of Athens.* [Mr. Hugh Williams in his *Travels in Italy, Greece*, etc., has the following: 'Our servant, who had gone before to procure accommodation, met us at the gate, and conducted us to Theodore Macri, the Consulina's, where we at present live. This lady is the widow of the consul, and has three lovely daughters; the eldest celebrated for her beauty, and said to be the "Maid of Athens" of Lord Byron. Their apartment is immediately opposite to ours, and, if you could see them, as we do now, through the gently waving aromatic plants before our window, you would leave your heart in Athens.']

Page 160. Ζώη μοῦ, σάς ἀγαπῶ. Romaic expression of tenderness. It means, 'My life, I love you!'

Page 161. *By all the token-flowers that tell.* In the East (where ladies are not taught to write, lest they should scribble assignations) flowers, cinders, pebbles, etc., convey the sentiments of the parties by that universal deputy of Mercury — an old woman. A cinder says, 'I burn for thee;' a bunch of flowers tied with hair, 'Take me and fly;' but a pebble declares — what nothing else can.

Line 1. *Sons of the Greeks, arise!* The song was written by Riga, who perished in the attempt to revolutionise Greece. This translation is as literal as the author could make it in verse. It is of the same measure as that of the original.

Page 162, line 19. *The seven-hill'd city.* Constantinople, ''Επτάλοφος.'

Line 1. *I enter thy garden of roses.* The song from which this is taken is a great favourite with the young girls of Athens of all classes. Their manner of singing it is by verses in rotation, the whole number present joining in the chorus. I have heard it frequently at our 'χόροι,' in the winter of 1810–11. The air is plaintive and pretty.

Page 163. JOSEPH BLACKET. [A cobbler (1786–1810) who attained some celebrity as a poet. He was praised by Southey, and was patronized by the Milbanke family.]

Page 164. EPISTLE TO A FRIEND. [Rev. Francis Hodgson.]

Page 168. LINES TO A LADY WEEPING. [This impromptu owed its birth to an *on dit*, that the Princess Charlotte of Wales burst into tears on hearing that the Whigs had found it impossible to put together a cabinet, at the period of Mr. Perceval's death. They were appended to the first edition of *The Corsair*, and excited a sensation marvelously disproportionate to their length, — or, we may add, their merit. The ministerial prints raved for two months on end, in the most foul-mouthed vituperation of the poet, and all that belonged to him — the *Morning Post* even announced a motion in the House of Lords — 'and all this,' Byron writes to Moore, 'as Bedreddin in the *Arabian Nights* remarks, for making a cream tart with pepper: how odd, that eight lines should have given birth, I really think, to eight thousand!']

Page 169. *O'er her Druid's tomb.* [The reader will recall Collins's exquisite lines on the tomb of Thomson: 'In yonder grave a Druid lies,' etc.]

Page 170, line 61. *And censure, wisely loud, be justly mute.* [The following lines were omitted by the Committee: —

Nay, lower still, the Drama yet deplores
That late she deign'd to crawl upon all-fours.
When Richard roars in Bosworth for a horse,
If you command, the steed must come in course.
If you decree, the stage must condescend
To soothe the sickly taste we dare not mend.
Blame not our judgment should we acquiesce
And gratify you more by showing less.
The past reproach let present scenes refute,
Nor shift from man to babe, from babe to brute.]

Page 175. THE DEVIL'S DRIVE. [Of this rambling satire, filled with political allusions to Castlereagh and the politics of the day, the following stanzas were first published in the edition of 1904 from a manuscript in the possession of the Earl of Ilchester: 6, 7, 9, 13–16, 19–27.]

Page 180, line 26. *Pagod.* [Pagoda, an idol.]

Line 29. *The rapture of the strife.* 'Certaminis *gaudia*' — the expression of Attila in his harangue to his army, previous to the battle of Chalons, given in Cassiodorus.

Line 46. *He who of old would rend the oak.* ['Out of town six days. On my return found my poor little pagod, Napoleon, pushed off his pedestal. It is his own fault. Like Milo, he would rend the oak; but it closed again, wedged his hands, and now the beasts — lion, bear, down to the dirtiest jackal — may all tear him. That Muscovite winter *wedged* his arms.' — Byron's *Journal*, April 8, 1814.]

Line 55. *The Roman, when his burning heart.* Sylla.

Line 64. *The Spaniard, when the lust of sway.* [The Emperor Charles V., who abdicated in 1555 and retired to a monastery.]

Page 181, line 125. *Corinth's pedagogue.* [Dionysius II., on losing Syracuse, retired as a private man to Corinth, where he is said to have taught school.]

Line 127. *Thou Timour.* The cage of Bajazet, by order of Tamerlane.

Line 142. *The very Fiend's arch mock.* [The edition of 1832 contained this note, of uncertain allusion: 'We believe there is no doubt of the truth of the anecdote here alluded to — of Napoleon's having found leisure for an unworthy amour, the very evening of his arrival at Fontainebleau.']

Page 183, line 38. *And wean from penury the soldier's heir.* [The edition of 1900 adds the following six lines from the manuscript: —

Or deem to living war-worn Valour just
Each wounded remnant — Albion's cherish'd trust —
Warm his decline with those endearing rays,
Whose bounteous sunshine yet may gild his days —
So shall that Country — while he sinks to rest —
His hand hath sought for — by his heart be blest!

Like most of these late accretions to Byron's acknowledged works they had better have been left to oblivion.]

Line 8. *The thought of Brutus — for his was not there!* [See note on page 64, line 525.]

Page 187, line 8. *Labedoyère.* [An officer of Napoleon. Despite many appeals to Louis XVIII., he was shot, August 19, 1815.]

Line 18. *Like the Wormwood Star foretold.* See Rev. chap. viii, v. 7, &c.

Line 36. *And thou, too, of the snow-white plume!* ['Poor dear Murat, what an end! His white plume used to be a rallying point in battle, like Henry the Fourth's. He refused a confessor and a bandage; so would neither suffer his soul nor body to be bandaged.' — *B. Letter* to Moore, November 4, 1815.]

Line 37. *Whose realm refused thee ev'n a tomb.* Murat's remains are said to have been torn from the grave and burnt.

Page 188, line 21. *Of three bright colours, each divine.* The tricolour.

Page 193, line 46. *Till vanquish'd senates trembled as they praised.* [February 7, 1787, Sheridan spoke for over five hours on the impeachment of Warren Hastings. Pitt thereupon moved the adjournment of the debate, on the ground that the minds of the members were too agitated to discuss the question with coolness.]

Line 82. *And stoop to strive with Misery at the door.* [This was not fiction. Only a few days before his death, Sheridan wrote thus to Mr. Rogers: 'I am absolutely undone and broken-hearted. They are going to put the carpets out of window, and break into Mrs. S.'s room and *take me:* 150*l.* will remove all difficulty. For God's sake let me see you!' Moore was the immediate bearer of the required sum. This was written on the 15th of May. On the 14th of July, Sheridan's remains were deposited in Westminster Abbey, — his pallbearers being the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Lauderdale, Earl Mulgrave, the Lord Bishop of London, Lord Holland, and Earl Spencer.]

Page 194, line 103. *The worthy rival of the wondrous Three!* Fox — Pitt — Burke.

Page 196. *When that vast edifice display'd Looks with its venerable face.* [So in the Murray edition. There would seem to be some error in the text. Possibly a line has dropped out between the two here given.]

Page 211, line 15. *Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of yore.* [Admiral Byron was remarkable for never making a voyage without a tempest. He was known to the sailors by the facetious name of 'Foul-weather Jack.']

Page 212, line 73. *I did remind thee of our own dear Lake.* The lake of Newstead Abbey.

Page 216, line 191. *Like to the Pontic monarch.* Mithridates.

Page 226. *Scurra — Mamurra.* [Scurra, a wit. — Mamurra, the favorite of Cæsar savagely lampooned by Catullus.]

Page 227. *Tom Sternhold.* [Thomas Sternhold (1500–1549), author, with John Hopkins, of a metrical version of the Psalms.]

Page 227. *Hetman.* [A Cossack chief.]

Page 230. 'I READ THE "CHRISTABEL."' [The *Missionary* was written by Mr. Bowles; *Ilderim* by Mr. Gally Knight; and *Margaret of Anjou* by Miss Holford.]

Page 230. *Perry.* [James Perry (1756–1821), editor and proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle.*]

Page 231. 'DEAR DOCTOR, I HAVE READ YOUR PLAY.' [John William Polidori (1795–1821), physician and author. In 1816 he went as physician and secretary to Lord Byron, then departing on his exile from England. His whimsical and jealous temper led to a separation before Byron left Switzerland. His most noted work is the *The Vampire*, published in 1819, which he attributed to Byron. For the other names in this poem the reader is referred to the *Dictionary of National Biography.*]

Page 241, line 1. *Still must I hear?*

Imit. Semper ego auditor tantum? nunquamne reponam,
Vexatus toties rauci Theseide Codri? JUV. *Sat.* I. 1.

Line 1. *Hoarse Fitzgerald.* [For the long period of thirty-two years, William Thomas Fitzgerald, poetaster, was an attendant at the anniversary dinners of the Literary Fund, and constantly honored the occasion with an ode, which he himself recited with most comical dignity of emphasis.]

Page 242, line 21. *Like Hamet's, shall be free.* Cid Hamet Benengeli promises repose to his pen, in the last chapter of *Don Quixote.* Oh! that our voluminous gentry would follow the example of Cid Hamet Benengeli! [Byron's text reads *shall* for *shalt.*]

Line 55. *This Lambe must own.* [George Lamb, the first cousin of Lady Byron, was the author of a farce, *Whistle for It*, which 'was damned with great expedition at Covent Garden.' He also wrote for the *Edinburgh Review.*]

Line 65. *Hackney'd jokes from Miller.* [A popular book of jests attributed to 'Joe' Miller.]

Line 82. *Jeffrey's heart or Lambe's Bœotian head.* ['This was not just. Neither the heart nor the head of these gentlemen are at all what they are here represented. At the time this was written, I was personally unacquainted with either.' — B. 1816.]

Page 243, line 87. *While these are censors, 'twould be sin to spare.*

Imit. Stulta est Clementia, cum tot ubique
— occurras perituræ parcere chartæ.
Juv. *Sat.* I. 17.

Line 93. *Then should you ask me.*

Imit. Cur tamen hoc potius libeat decurrere campo
Per quem magnus equos Auruncæ flexit alumnus:
Si vacat, et placidi rationem admittitis, edam.
Juv. *Sat.* I. 19.

Line 94. *Gifford.* [William Gifford (1756–1826), poet, editor, critic, was the author of several original satires, notably the *Baviad* and the *Maeviad*. Through his connection with Murray he had much to do with the punctuation and formation of Byron's text.]

Line 100. *Pye.* [Henry James Pye was poet laureate from 1790 till 1813.]

Line 103. *Time was, ere yet in these degenerate days.* [The first edition of the Satire opened with this line.]

Line 128. *Little's lyrics.* [Moore published his early poems under the name Thomas Little, Esq.]

Line 132. *The cow-pox, tractors, galvanism, and gas.* [*Cow-pox*, vaccination; *tractors*, a quack panacea of the day; *gas*, laughing gas.]

Line 142. *Stott.* Stott, better known in the *Morning Post* by the name of Hafiz. This personage is at present the most profound explorer of the bathos. I remember, when the reigning family left Portugal, a special Ode of Master Stott's, beginning thus: — (*Stott loquitur quoad Hibernia*).

'Princely offspring of Braganza,
Erin greets thee with a stanza,' &c.

Page 244, line 153. *Lays of Minstrels.* See the *Lay of the Last Minstrel, passim.* Never was any plan so incongruous and absurd as the groundwork of this production. The entrance of Thunder and Lightning, prologuising to Bayes' tragedy, unfortunately takes away the merit of originality from the dialogue between Messieurs the Spirits of Flood and Fell in the first canto. Then we have the amiable William of Deloraine, 'a stark moss-trooper,' videlicet, a happy compound of poacher, sheep-stealer, and highwayman. The propriety of his magical lady's injunction not to read can only be equalled by his candid acknowledgment of his independence of the trammels of spelling, although, to use his own elegant phrase, ''t was his neck-verse at Harribee,' i. e. the gallows. — The biography of Gilpin Horner, and the marvellous pedestrian page, who travelled twice as fast as his master's horse, without the aid of seven-leagued boots, are *chefs-d'œuvre* in the improvement of taste. For incident we have the invisible, but by no means sparing box on the ear bestowed on the page, and the entrance of a knight and charger into the castle, under the very natural disguise of a wain of hay. Marmion, the hero of the latter romance, is exactly what William of Deloraine would have been, had he been able to read and write. The poem was manufactured for Messrs. Constable, Murray, and Miller, worshipful booksellers, in consideration of the receipt of a sum of money; and truly, considering the inspiration, it is a very creditable production. If Mr. Scott will write for hire, let him do his best for his paymasters, but not disgrace his genius which is undoubtedly great, by a repetition of black-letter ballad imitations.

Line 184. '*Good night to Marmion.*' The pathetic and also prophetic exclamation of Henry Blount, Esquire, on the death of honest Marmion.

Page 245, line 234. '*God help thee,*' *Southey.* The last line, 'God help thee,' is an evident plagiarism from the *Anti-Jacobin* to Mr. Southey, on his Dactylics. [Gifford's parody on Southey's Dactylics, which ends thus: —

'Dactylics, call'st thou 'em? — "God help thee, silly one.'"]

Line 240. '*For fear of growing double.*' *Lyrical Ballads*, p. 4. — *The Tables Turned*, stanza 1.

Line 250. *Confounded night with day.* Mr. W. in his preface labours hard to prove, that prose and verse are much the same; and certainly his precepts and practice are strictly conformable: —

'And thus to Betty's questions he
Made answer, like a traveller bold:
"The cock did crow, to-whoo, to-whoo,
And the sun did shine so cold."'
Lyrical Ballads, p. 179.

Line 260. *Takes a pixy for a muse.* Coleridge's Poems, p. 11, *Songs of the Pixies*, i. e. Devonshire fairies; p. 42, we have, *Lines to a Young Lady;* and, p. 52, *Lines to a Young Ass.*

Line 265. *Lewis.* [Matthew Gregory Lewis, M. P. for Hindon, never distinguished himself in Parliament, but, mainly in consequence of the clever use he made of his knowledge of the German language, then a rare accomplishment, attracted much notice in the literary world, at a very early period of his life. His *Tales of Terror*, the drama of the *Castle Spectre*, and the novel of *The Monk* invested the name of Lewis with an extraordinary degree of celebrity.]

Page 246, line 297. *Hibernian Strangford! with thine eyes of blue.* The reader, who may wish for an explanation of this, may refer to Strangford's *Camoëns*, p. 127, note to p. 56, or to the last page of the *Edinburgh Review* of Strangford's *Camoëns.*

Line 310. *Hayley.* [William Hayley (1745–1820), author of *The Triumphs of Temper* and *The Triumph of Music*, etc., is chiefly remembered as the friend and biographer of Cowper. — *Ye tarts*, the pastry cook, like the trunkmaker, is supposed to preside over the limbo of defunct literature.]

Line 321. *Grahame.* Mr. Grahame has poured forth two volumes of cant, under the name of *Sabbath Walks*, and *Biblical Pictures.*

Line 327. *Hail, Sympathy! thy soft idea brings.* [Immediately before this line, we find, in the original manuscript, the following, which Lord Byron good-naturedly consented to omit, at the request of Mr. Dallas, who was, no doubt, a friend of the scribbler they refer to: —

In verse most stale, unprofitable, flat —
Come, let us change the scene, and '*glean*' with Pratt;
In him an author's luckless lot behold,
Condemn'd to make the books which once he sold:
Degraded man! again resume thy trade —
The votaries of the Muse are ill repaid,
Though daily puffs once more invite to buy
A new edition of thy *Sympathy*.

To which this note was appended: — 'Mr. Pratt, once a Bath bookseller, now a London author, has written as much, to as little purpose, as any of his scribbling cotemporaries. Mr. P.'s *Sympathy* is in rhyme; but his prose productions are the most voluminous.' The more popular of these last were entitled *Gleanings*.]

Line 351. '*Awake a louder and a loftier strain.*' The first line in Bowles's *Spirit of Discovery:* a very spirited and pretty dwarf Epic. Among other exquisite lines we have the following: —

— 'A kiss
Stole on the list'ning silence, never yet
Here heard; they trembled even as if the power,' &c., &c.

That is, the woods of Madeira trembled to a kiss; very much astonished, as well they might be, at such a phenomenon. ['Misquoted and misunderstood by me; but not intentionally. It was not the "woods," but the people in them who trembled — why, Heaven only knows — unless they were overheard making this prodigious smack.' — B., 1816.]

Line 358. *A gentle episode.* The episode above alluded to is the story of 'Robert à Machin' and 'Anna d'Arfet,' a pair of constant lovers, who performed the kiss above mentioned, that startled the woods of Madeira.

Line 372. *Consult Lord Fanny and confide in Curll.* Curll is one of the Heroes of the *Dunciad*, and was a bookseller. Lord Fanny is the poetical name of Lord Hervey, author of *Lines to the Imitator of Horace*.

Page 247, line 378. *What Mallet did for hire.* Lord Bolingbroke hired Mallet to traduce Pope after his decease, because the poet had retained some copies of a work by Lord Bolingbroke — the *Patriot King* — which that splendid, but malignant, genius had ordered to be destroyed.

Line 380. *To rave with Dennis, and with Ralph to rhyme.* Dennis the critic, and Ralph the rhymester. —

'Silence, ye wolves! while Ralph to Cynthia howls,
Making night hideous: answer him, ye owls!'
Dunciad.

Line 382. *Not raised thy hoof against the lion dead.* See Bowles's late edition of Pope's works, for which he received three hundred pounds. Thus Mr. B. has experienced how much easier it is to profit by the reputation of another than to elevate his own.

Line 391. *Fresh fish from Hippocrene.* ['"Helicon" is a mountain, and not a fish-pond. It should have been "Hippocrene."' — B., 1816. The text has read Helicon; Byron's correction is followed.]

Line 406. *Cottle.* Mr. Cottle, Amos, Joseph, I don't know which, but one or both, once sellers of books they did not write, and now writers of books they do not sell, have published a pair of Epics — *Alfred* (poor Alfred! Pye has been at him too!) — *Alfred* and the *Fall of Cambria*. [Joseph Cottle is the author of these works.]

Line 414. *Maurice.* Mr. Maurice [the Rev. Thomas Maurice, 1754–1824] hath manufactured the component parts of a ponderous quarto, upon the beauties of *Richmond Hill*, and the like: — it also takes in a charming view of Turnham Green, Hammersmith, Brentford, Old and New, and the parts adjacent.

Line 424. *Sheffield.* Poor Montgomery, though praised by every English Review, has been bitterly reviled by the *Edinburgh*. After all, the bard of Sheffield is a man of considerable genius. His *Wanderer of Switzerland* is worth a thousand *Lyrical Ballads*, and at least fifty 'degraded epics.' [James Montgomery (1771–1854) edited a newspaper at Sheffield.]

Page 248, line 467. *And Bow-street myrmidons stood laughing by.* In 1806, Messrs. Jeffrey and Moore met at Chalk-Farm. The duel was prevented by the interference of the magistracy; and on examination, the balls of the pistols were found to have evaporated. This incident gave occasion to much waggery in the daily prints. [The above note was struck out of the fifth edition, and the following, after being submitted to Moore, substituted in its place: — 'I am informed that Mr. Moore published at the time a disavowal of the statements in the newspapers, as far as regarded himself; and, in justice to him, I mention this circumstance. As I never heard of it before, I cannot state the particulars, and was only made acquainted with the fact very lately.' — November 4, 1811.]

Line 472. *Tweed ruffled half his waves.* The Tweed here behaved with proper decorum; it would have been entirely reprehensible in the English half of the river to have shown the smallest symptom of apprehension.

Line 509. *Athenian Aberdeen.* His lordship has been much abroad, is a member of the Athenian Society, and reviewer of Gell's *Topography of Troy*. [George Hamilton Gordon, fourth Earl of Aberdeen. In 1822, he published an *Inquiry into the Principles of Beauty in Grecian Architecture*.]

Line 510. *Herbert.* Mr. Herbert is a translator of Icelandic and other poetry. One of the principal pieces is a *Song on the Recovery of Thor's Hammer:* the translation is a pleasant chant in the vulgar tongue, and endeth thus: —

'Instead of money and rings, I wot,
The hammer's bruises were her lot,
Thus Odin's son his hammer got.'

[The Hon. William Herbert, brother to the Earl of Carnarvon. He also published, in 1811, *Helga*, a poem in seven cantos.]

Line 512. *Sydney.* The Rev. Sydney Smith, the reputed author of *Peter Plymley's Letters*, and sundry criticisms.

Line 515. *Pillans.* Pillans is a tutor at Eton. ['James Pillans (1778–1864), Rector of the High School, and Professor of Humanity in the University, Edinburgh. Byron probably assumed that the review of Hodgson's *Translation of Ju-*

venal, in the *Edinburgh Review*, April, 1808, was by him.' — E. H. COLERIDGE.]

Line 516. *Lambe.* [See note on line 55 *supra.*]

Line 524. *Lest blundering Brougham destroy the sale.* Mr. Brougham, in No. XXV. of the *Edinburgh Review*, throughout the article concerning *Don Pedro de Cevallos*, has displayed more politics than policy; many of the worthy burgesses of Edinburgh being so incensed at the infamous principles it evinces, as to have withdrawn their subscriptions.

Page 249, line 535. *That gilds its rear.* See the colour of the back binding of the *Edinburgh Review.*

Line 542. *Henry Petty.* [The third Marquis of Lansdowne, a constant visitor at Holland House.]

Line 551. *His lordship can at least translate.* Lord Holland has translated some specimens of Lope de Vega, inserted in his life of the author. Both are bepraised by his *disinterested* guests.

Line 557. *My lady skims the cream of each critique.* Certain it is, her ladyship is suspected of having displayed her matchless wit in the *Edinburgh Review.* However that may be, we know, from good authority, that the manuscripts are submitted to her perusal — no doubt, for correction.

Line 560. *Now to the Drama turn.* [To save space the student desiring information on the obscurer names in this and the two following paragraphs must be referred to the *Dictionary of National Biography.*]

Line 562. *A prince within a barrel pent.* In the melo-drama of *Tekeli* [by Theodore Hook], that heroic prince is clapped into a barrel on the stage; a new asylum for distressed heroes.

Page 250, line 639. *Greville and Argyle.* To prevent any blunder, such as mistaking a street for a man, I beg leave to state, that it is the institution, and not the duke of that name, which is here alluded to. A gentleman, with whom I am slightly acquainted, lost in the Argyle Rooms several thousand pounds at backgammon. It is but justice to the manager in this instance to say, that some degree of disapprobation was manifested: but why are the implements of gaming allowed in a place devoted to the society of both sexes. [The Argyle Institution was founded by Colonel Greville.]

Line 642. *Petronius.* Petronius, 'Arbiter elegantiarum' to Nero, 'and a very pretty fellow in his day,' as Mr. Congreve's 'Old Bachelor' saith of Hannibal.

Page 251, line 686. *To live like Clodius, and like Falkland fall.* I knew the late Lord Falkland well. On Sunday night I beheld him presiding at his own table, in all the honest pride of hospitality; on Wednesday morning, at three o'clock, I saw stretched before me all that remained of courage, feeling, and a host of passions. He was a gallant and successful officer; his faults were the faults of a sailor — as such, Britons will forgive them. He died like a brave man in a better cause; for had he fallen in like manner on the deck of the frigate to which he was just appointed, his last moments would have been held up by his countrymen as an example to succeeding heroes. [Lord Falkland was killed in a duel by Mr. Powell, in 1809. It was not by words only that Lord Byron gave proof of sympathy on the occasion. Though his own difficulties pressed on him at the time, he contrived to administer relief to the widow and children of his friend. The infamous Clodius intruded himself into Cæsar's house while the women were celebrating the mysteries of the Bona Dea. On his account Cæsar divorced his wife Pompeia.]

Line 717. *Miles Andrews.* [Miles Peter Andrews, many years M. P. for Bewdley, Colonel of the Prince of Wales's Volunteers, proprietor of a gunpowder manufactory at Dartford, author of numerous prologues, epilogues, and farces, and one of the heroes of the *Baviad.*]

Line 722. *Ah! who would take their titles with their rhymes?* [In the original manuscript we find these lines: —

> In these, our times, with daily wonders big,
> A letter'd peer is like a letter'd pig;
> Both know their alphabet, but who, from thence,
> Infers that peers or pigs have manly sense?
> Still less that such should woo the graceful Nine:
> Parnassus was not made for lords and swine.]

Line 723. *Roscommon.* [Wentworth Dillon, fourth Earl of Roscommon (1633–1685), attempted to found a literary academy.]

Line 723. *Sheffield.* [John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham (1649–1721), author of an *Essay on Poetry*, etc.]

Line 726. *Carlisle.* [Frederick Howard, fifth Earl of Carlisle (1748–1825), Lord Byron's guardian, was author of *Tragedies and Poems*, etc.] The Earl of Carlisle has lately published an eighteen-penny pamphlet on the state of the stage, and offers his plan for building a new theatre. It is to be hoped his lordship will be permitted to bring forward anything for the stage — except his own tragedies.

> 'Doff that lion's hide,
> And hang a calf-skin on those recreant limbs.'
> Shak. *King John.*

Lord Carlisle's works, most resplendently bound, form a conspicuous ornament to his book-shelves: —

> 'The rest is all but leather and prunella.'

Line 745. '*All the talents.*' *All the Blocks, or an Antidote to 'All the Talents,'* by Flagellum (W. H. Ireland), London, 1807.

Page 252, line 748. *Melville's Mantle.* A parody on *Elijah's Mantle*, a poem. ['*Elijah's Mantle, being verses occasioned by the death of that illustrious statesman, the Right Hon. W. Pitt*, was written by James Sayer. *Melville's Mantle* was published by Budd, 1807.' — E. H. COLERIDGE.]

Line 756. *Rosa's prose.* This lovely little Jessica, the daughter of the noted Jew King, seems to be a follower of the Della Crusca school, and has published two volumes of very respectable absurdities in rhyme, as times go; besides sundry novels in the style of the first edition of *The Monk*. [‘She since married the *Morning Post* — an exceeding good match; and is now dead — which is better.’ — B. 1816.]

Line 759. *Crusca's bards.* [The Della Cruscans were a small clique of English writers living at Florence, who published in a paper called *The World*. Mrs. Piozzi, Robert Merry (1755–1798), Mrs. Hannah Cowley (‘Anna Matilda,’ 1743–1809), and other scribblers were connected with the circle.]

Line 764. *O. P. Q.* These are the signatures of various worthies who figure in the poetical departments of the newspapers.

Line 770. *How ladies read, and literati laud!* [‘This was meant for poor Blackett, who was then patronised by A. J. B.’ (Lady Byron); ‘but *that* I did not know, or this would not have been written, at least I think not.’ — B. 1816. Joseph Blackett, the shoemaker. He died at Seaham, in 1810. His poems were afterwards collected by Pratt.]

Line 774. *Capel Lofft.* Capel Lofft, Esq., the Mæcenas of shoemakers, and preface-writer-general to distressed versemen; a kind of gratis accoucheur to those who wish to be delivered of rhyme, but do not know how to bring it forth. [He was the patron of Robert Bloomfield.]

Line 777. *Bloomfield.* [Robert Bloomfield, author of *The Farmer Boy*, etc. His brother Nathaniel was a tailor, his brother George a shoemaker. The former was likewise a poet in a small way.]

Line 795. *Moorland weavers.* [T. Bakewell published, in 1807, *The Moorland Bard; or Poetical Recollections of a Weaver.*]

Lines 801, 803. *Campbell. — Rogers.* It would be superfluous to recall to the mind of the reader the authors of *The Pleasures of Memory* and *The Pleasures of Hope*, the most beautiful didactic poems in our language, if we except Pope's *Essay on Man:* but so many poetasters have started up, that even the names of Campbell and Rogers are become strange. [Beneath this note Byron scribbled, in 1816, —

> Pretty Miss Jaqueline
> Had a nose aquiline,
> And would assert rude
> Things of Miss Gertrude,
> While Mr. Marmion
> Led a great army on,
> Making Kehama look
> Like a fierce Mameluke.]

Page 253, line 818. *Sotheby, Macniel.* Sotheby [William S., 1757–1833], translator of Wieland's *Oberon* and Virgil's *Georgics*, and author of *Saul*, an epic poem. — Macniel [Hector M., 1746-1816], whose poems are deservedly popular, particularly *Scotland's Scaith* and the *Woes of War*, of which ten thousand copies were sold in one month.

Line 831. *White.* Henry Kirke White died at Cambridge, in October, 1806, in consequence of too much exertion in the pursuit of studies that would have matured a mind which disease and poverty could not impair, and which death itself destroyed rather than subdued. His poems abound in such beauties as must impress the reader with the liveliest regret that so short a period was allotted to talents which would have dignified even the sacred functions he was destined to assume.

Line 857. *Crabbe.* [‘I consider Crabbe and Coleridge as the first of these times, in point of power and genius.’ — B. 1816.]

Line 859. *Shee.* Mr. Shee, author of *Rhymes on Art* and *Elements of Art*. [Later Sir Martin Shee became President of the Royal Academy.]

Line 877. *Wright.* Mr. Wright [Walter Rodwell W.], late Consul-General for the Seven Islands, is author of a very beautiful poem, just published: it is entitled *Horæ Ionicæ*, and is descriptive of the isles and the adjacent coast of Greece.

Line 881. *Associate bards.* The translators of the Anthology [the Rev. Robert Bland (1779–1825) and John Herman Merivale (1731–1844)] have since published separate poems, which evince genius that only requires opportunity to attain eminence.

Page 254, line 902. *False glare attracts, but more offends the eye.* The neglect of *The Botanic Garden* is some proof of returning taste. The scenery is its sole recommendation.

Page 255, line 966. *Hoare — Hoyle.* [The Rev. Charles James Hoare published, in 1808, the *Shipwreck of St. Paul*, a Seatonian prize poem. The Rev. Charles Hoyle, author of *Exodus*, an epic in thirteen books, and several other Seatonian prize poems.] The *Games of Hoyle*, well known to the votaries of whist, chess, etc., are not to be superseded by the vagaries of his poetical namesake, whose poem comprised, as expressly stated in the advertisement, all the ‘plagues of Egypt.’

Line 973. *Clarke.* This person, who has lately betrayed the most rabid symptoms of confirmed authorship, is writer of a poem denominated *The Art of Pleasing*, ‘as lucus a non lucendo,’ containing little pleasantry and less poetry. He also acts as monthly stipendiary and collector of calumnies for the *Satirist*. If this unfortunate young man would exchange the magazines for the mathematics, and endeavour to take a decent degree in his university, it might eventually prove more serviceable than his present salary. [Hewson Clarke left the University of Cambridge without taking his degree. In the *Satirist* he reviewed Byron's early works with considerable severity.]

Line 981. *Oh! dark asylum of a Vandal race.* Into Cambridgeshire the Emperor Probus transported a considerable body of Vandals. — Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, vol. ii, p. 83. There is no reason to doubt the truth of this assertion; the breed is still in high perfection.

Line 983. *Hodgson.* This gentleman's name requires no praise: the man who in translation displays unquestionable genius may be well expected to excel in original composition, of which, it is to be hoped, we shall soon see a splendid specimen. [Francis Hodgson (1781–1852), Byron's life-long friend, besides his translation of Juvenal, published several original works.]

Line 984. *Hewson.* Hewson Clarke, *Esq.*, as it is written.

Line 989. *Richards. The Aboriginal Britons*, an excellent poem, by Richards. [The Rev. George Richards (1769–1835), Fellow of Oriel College.]

Line 1010. *And urge thy bards to gain a name like thine.* [With this verse the satire originally ended.]

Line 1016. *Dame Portland.* A friend of mine being asked, why his Grace of Portland was likened to an old woman, replied, 'he supposed it was because he was past bearing?' His Grace is now gathered to his grandmothers, where he sleeps as sound as ever; but even his sleep was better than his colleagues' waking. 1811. [William Henry Cavendish, third Duke of Portland (1738–1809).]

Line 1021. *Beauty's native clime.* Georgia.

Line 1022. *Kaff.* Mount Caucasus.

Line 1026. *Carr.* From the many tours he made, Sir John was called 'The Jaunting Car.'

Page 256, line 1034. *Gell.* Mr. Gell's *Topography of Troy and Ithaca* cannot fail to ensure the approbation of every man possessed of classical taste, as well for the information Mr. Gell conveys to the mind of the reader, as for the ability and research the respective works display. ['Since seeing the plain of Troy, my opinions are somewhat changed as to the above note. Gell's survey was hasty and superficial.' — B. 1816.]

Line 1045. *Melbourne house.* ['Singular enough, and *din* enough, God knows.' — B. 1816.]

Line 1070. *Yet rarely blames unjustly, now declare.* ['The greater part of this satire I most sincerely wish had never been written, not only on account of the injustice of much of the critical and some of the personal part of it, but the tone and temper are such as I cannot approve.' — BYRON, July 14, 1816. *Diodati, Geneva.* — Subsequently Byron, in manuscript notes, letters, or elsewhere, did full justice to many of the persons satirized in this poem, — notably to Scott, Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, Jeffrey, Holland, Lamb, Carlisle.]

Page 256, line 7. *Dubost.* In an English newspaper, which finds its way abroad wherever there are Englishmen, I read an account of this dirty dauber's caricature of Mr. H—— as a 'beast,' and the consequent action, etc. The circumstance is, probably, too well known to require further comment. [The gentleman here alluded to was Thomas Hope, Esq., the author of *Anastasius*, and a munificent patron of art. Having somehow offended an unprincipled French painter, by name Dubost, that adventurer revenged himself by a picture called 'Beauty and the Beast,' in which Mr. Hope and his lady were represented according to the well-known fairy story.]

Line 11. *Moschus.* [In the original MS., Hobhouse.]

Page 257, line 75. *Pitt has furnish'd us a word or two.* Mr. Pitt was liberal in his additions to our parliamentary tongue: as may be seen in many publications, particularly the *Edinburgh Review.* [Query, what words? Byron, in notes to his own works, sometimes apologizes for the use of well-established words.]

Page 258, line 132. *Where angry Townly lifts his voice on high.* [In Vanbrugh's comedy of *The Provoked Husband.*]

Line 136. '*Hollowing Hotspur.*' 'And in his ear I 'll hollow, Mortimer!' — *I Henry IV.*, i, 3.

Page 259, line 164. *Lying Valet.* [Garrick's comedy of that name.]

Line 166. *A wandering* '*Peregrine.*' [A character in George Colman's comedy, *John Bull.*]

Line 173. *Drawcansir.* [A savage braggadocio in Buckingham's *The Rehearsal.*]

Line 195. *Awake a louder and a loftier strain.* [The first line of Bowles's *A Spirit of Discovery by Sea.*]

Line 226. *Virgil's devilish verses.* Harvey, the *circulator* of the *circulation* of the blood, used to fling away Virgil in his ecstasy of admiration, and say, 'the book had a devil.'

Line 228. *Tavell.* [The Rev. G. F. Tavell was a fellow and tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge, during Lord Byron's residence, and owed this notice to the zeal with which he had protested against some juvenile vagaries.]

Page 260, line 241. Hells *and* clubs. 'Hell,' a gaming-house so-called, where you risk little, and are cheated a good deal. 'Club,' a pleasant purgatory, where you lose more, and are not supposed to be cheated at all.

Line 281. *A halter'd heroine Johnson sought to slay.* 'Irene had to speak two lines with the bowstring round her neck; but the audience cried out "Murder!" and she was obliged to go off the stage alive.' — BOSWELL's *Johnson.*

Line 290. *Whose postscripts prate of dyeing* '*heroines blue?*' In the postscript to the *Castle Spectre*, Mr. Lewis tells us, that though blacks were unknown in England at the period of his action, yet he has made the anachronism to set off the scene; and if he could have produced the effect 'by making his heroine blue,' — I quote him, — 'blue he would have made her!'

Line 296. *I loathe an opera worse than Dennis did.* [In 1706, Dennis, the critic, wrote an *Essay on the Operas after the Italian manner, which are about to be established on the English stage;* in which he endeavored to show, that it is a diversion of more pernicious consequence than the most licentious play that ever appeared upon the stage.]

Page 261, line 311. '*Fop's Alley.*' [A meeting place at the Opera House for the beaux and fashionables of the day.]

Line 319. *Ere scenes were play'd by many a reverend clerk.* 'The first theatrical representations, entitled "Mysteries and Moralities," were generally enacted at Christmas, by monks (as the only persons who could read), and latterly by the clergy and students of the universities. The dramatis personæ were usually Adam, Pater Cœlestis, Faith, Vice,' etc., etc. — See Warton's *History of English Poetry.*

Line 326. *Benvolio suffers such a show.* Benvolio does not bet; but every man who maintains race-horses is a promoter of all the concomitant evils of the turf. [*Benvolio*, the second Earl Grosvenor, a patron of the turf, was originator of a motion in Parliament to suppress the Sunday newspapers.]

Line 330. *Foote's fantastic time.* [Samuel Foote (1720–1777), actor and playwright.]

Line 339. '*Chrononhotonthologos.*' [*Chrononhotonthologos*, 'the most tragical tragedy ever yet tragedised by any company of tragedians,' by Henry Carey.]

Line 349. *But find in thine, like pagan Plato's bed.* Under Plato's pillow a volume of the *Mimes* of Sophron was found the day he died.

Line 352. *Fetter'd by whig Walpole.* [In 1737 the manager of Goodman's Fields Theatre having brought to Sir Robert Walpole a farce called *The Golden Rump*, which had been proffered for exhibition, the minister paid the profits which might have accrued from the performance, and detained the copy. He then made extracts of the most exceptionable passages, abounding in profaneness, sedition, and blasphemy, read them to the house, and obtained leave to bring in a bill to limit the number of playhouses; to subject all dramatic writings to the inspection of the Lord Chamberlain; and to compel the proprietors to take out a license for every production before it could appear on the stage.]

Line 355. *Chesterfield.* His speech on the Licensing Act is one of his most eloquent efforts.

Line 361. '*Archer*' — '*Sullen.*' [Characters in Farquhar's *The Beaux' Stratagem.*]

Line 362. '*Copper*' *spouse.* Michael Perez, the 'Copper Captain,' in [Fletcher's] *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife.*

Line 366. *Willis' skill.* [The Rev. Dr. Francis Willis attended George III. in his first attack of madness.]

Line 367. *Macheath's example.* [Dr. Johnson was of the like opinion. Of the *Beggar's Opera* he says, in his Life of Gay: 'The play, like many others, was plainly written only to divert, without any moral purpose, and is, therefore, not likely to do good; nor can it be conceived, without more speculation than life requires or admits, to be productive of much evil.']

Line 369. *Collier's curse.* Jerry Collier's controversy with Congreve, etc., on the subject of the drama, is too well known to require further comment.

Page 262, line 382. *And Simeon kicks, where Baxter only* '*shoves.*' Mr. Simeon is the very bully of beliefs, and castigator of 'good works.' He is ably supported by John Stickles, a labourer in the same vineyard: — but I say no more, for, according to Johnny in full congregation, '*no hopes for them as laughs.*' [The Rev. Charles Simeon, fellow of King's College, Cambridge,— a zealous Calvinist, who, in consequence of his zeal, was engaged in sundry warm disputations with other divines of the university.] *Baxter's Shove to heavy-a——d Christians*, the veritable title of a book once in good repute, and likely enough to be so again. [The author was really a certain William Bunyan.]

Line 402. *Lopp'd two final feet.* [He should have said two syllables, which, in iambic metre, form one foot. The iambic tetrameter is of much older use than *Hudibras.*]

Page 263, line 476. *Blake.* As famous a tonsor as Licinus himself, and better paid, and may, like him, be one day a senator, having a better qualification than one half of the heads he crops, viz. — independence.

Line 480. *Purge in spring — like Bayes.* ['*Bayes.* Why, I'll tell you what I do. If I am to write familiar things, as sonnets to Armida, and the like, I make use of stewed prunes only; but when I have a grand design in hand, I ever take physic and let blood; for when you would have pure swiftness of thought, and fiery flights of fancy, you must have a care of the pensive part. In fine, you must purge.' — *Rehearsal.* — It is said that Dryden resorted to purging for inspiration, and Byron himself did, or pretended to do, the same.]

Page 264, line 520. '*He'll swell my fifty thousand to a plum.*' [Cant term for £100,000.]

Line 530. *Is poor as Irus, or an Irish mine.* 'Iro pauperior:' this is the same beggar who boxed with Ulysses for a pound of kid's fry, which he lost, and half a dozen teeth besides. — See *Odyssey*, b. 18. — The Irish gold mine of Wicklow, which yields just ore enough to swear by, or gild a bad guinea.

Line 565. *Havard's fate.* For the story of Billy Havard's tragedy, see Davies's *Life of Garrick.* I believe it is *Regulus*, or *Charles the First.* The moment it was known to be his, the theatre thinned, and the book-seller refused to give the customary sum for the copyright.

Page 265, line 588. *Are damn'd alike by gods, and men, and columns.* [In the original MS. this couplet followed: —

> Though what 'Gods, men, and columns' interdict,
> The Devil and Jeffrey pardon — in a Pict.]

Line 593. *Eclectics.* To the Eclectic or Christian Reviewers I have to return thanks for the fervour of that charity which, in 1809, induced them to express a hope that a thing then published by me might lead to certain consequences, which, although natural enough, surely came but rashly from reverend lips.

Line 602. '*Strike at wretched kernes.*' [*Macbeth*, v. 7.]

Line 613. *No jest on* '*minors.*' [See the memorable critique of the *Edinburgh Review* on *Hours of Idleness*, vol. vii, p. 188.]

Line 620. *From Corydon unkind Alexis turns.* Invenies alium, si te hic fastidit, Alexin.

Line 638. *Jackson.* [John Jackson, champion of England from 1795 to 1803, was Byron's teacher in the art.]

Page 266, line 717. *Pollio play'd this prank.* [The MS. in Mr. Murray's possession reads *Rogers* for *Pollio.*]

Page 267, line 737. *There lives one druid.* [Cf. *English Bards*, v. 741, 742: —

> 'Ye Druids! rich in native lead,
> Who daily scribble for your daily bread.']

Line 762. *There 's plenty of the sort.* Here will Mr. Gifford allow me to introduce once more to his notice the sole survivor, the 'ultimus Romanorum,' the last of the Cruscanti! — 'Edwin' the 'profound,' by our Lady of Punishment! here he is, as lively as in the days of 'well said Baviad the Correct.' I thought Fitzgerald had been the tail of poesy; but, alas! he is only the penultimate.

A FAMILIAR EPISTLE TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

'What reams of paper, floods of ink,'
Do some men spoil, who never think!
And so perhaps you 'll say of me,
In which your readers may agree.
Still I write on, and tell you why;
Nothing 's so bad, you can't deny,
But may instruct or entertain
Without the risk of giving pain, etc., etc.

ON SOME MODERN QUACKS AND REFORMISTS.

In tracing of the human mind
  Through all its various courses,
Though strange, 't is true, we often find
  It knows not its resources:

And men through life assume a part
  For which no talents they possess,
Yet wonder that, with all their art,
  They meet no better with success, etc., etc.

Page 268, line 822. *Budgell's story.* [Eustace Budgell (1686–1737), the friend of Addison, drowned himself in the Thames.] On his table were found these words: — 'What Cato did, and Addison approved, cannot be wrong.'

Page 268, line 22. *Their murder'd sage's latest day.* Socrates drank the hemlock a short time before sunset.

Page 269, line 44. *The gay kiosk.* The kiosk is a Turkish summer-house; the palm is without the present walls of Athens, not far from the temple of Theseus, between which and the tree the wall intervenes.

Page 270, line 122. '*When Venus half avenged Minerva's shame.*' His lordship's name, and that of one who no longer bears it, are carved conspicuously on the Parthenon; above, in a part not far distant, are the torn remnants of the basso-relievos, destroyed in a vain attempt to remove them. [Lord Elgin was divorced from his first wife.]

Line 178. *And own himself an infant of fourscore.* Mr. West, on seeing the 'Elgin Collection' (I suppose we shall hear of the 'Abershaw' and 'Jack Shephard' collection), declared himself 'a mere tyro' in art.

Page 271, line 182. *His lordship's 'stone shop.'* Poor Cribb was sadly puzzled when the marbles were first exhibited at Elgin House: he asked if it was not 'a stone shop?'— He was right; it *is* a shop.

Line 203. *Eratostratus.* [For notoriety he set fire to the temple of Artemis of the Ephesians.]

Line 213. *Look to the Baltic.* [Copenhagen was bombarded by the English in September, 1807.]

Line 221. '*Look to the East.*' [Rebellions occurred in India, in 1809 and 1810.]

Line 231. *Barossa.* [At the battle of Barossa, March 5, 1811, the Spaniards gave no assistance to their English allies. The contingent of Portuguese, however, took part in the engagement.]

Line 245. '*Blest paper credit.*'

'Blest paper credit! last and best supply,
That lends Corruption lighter wings to fly!'
— Pope.

Page 272, line 264. *And pirates barter all that 's left behind.* The Deal and Dover Traffickers in specie.

Page 273, line 1. *Muse of the many-twinkling feet!*

'Glance their many-twinkling feet.'— Gray.

Line 21. *On Hounslow's heath to rival Wellesley's fame.* [In August, 1811, a duel was fought on Hounslow's heath between Lord Kilworth and Lord Mornington, a nephew of the Duke of Wellington. Rumor connected the quarrel with Lord Mornington's skill in dancing.]

Page 274, line 25. *The flow of Busby or of Fitz.* [Among the addresses sent in to the Drury Lane Committee was one by Dr. Busby, which began by asking —

'When energising objects men pursue,
What are the prodigies they cannot do?'

Thomas Busby (1755–1838), author of *The Age of Genius, A Satire*, etc. — *Fitz*, see *English Bards*, v. 1, and note.]

Line 60. *From Hamburg's port.* [After the fall of Hamburg, in 1810, the northern mails came from Gothenberg or Heligoland. Byron was never tired of satirizing the military gazettes.]

Line 75. *Meiner's four volumes upon womankind.* [*History of the Female Sex*, by Christopher Meiners.]

Lines 77, 78. *Brunck — Heyne.* [Well-known classical scholars and editors.]

Page 275, line 127. *Egypt's Almas.* Dancing girls — who do for hire what Waltz doth gratis.

Line 142. *Goats in their visage.* It cannot be complained now, as in the Lady Baussière's time, of the 'Sieur de la Croix,' that there be 'no whiskers;' but how far these are indications of valour in the field, or elsewhere, may *still* be questionable.

Line 151. *Though gentle Genlis, in her strife with Staël.* [Madame Genlis, commenting on the waltz, writes, 'as a foreigner, I shall not take the liberty to censure this kind of dance; but this I can say, that it appears intolerable to German writers of superior merits who are not accused of severity of manners.' — Quoted by E. H. Coleridge.]

Page 276, line 162. *The court, the Regent, like herself were new.* An anachronism — Waltz and the battle of Austerlitz are before said to have opened the ball together: the bard means, (if he means any thing,) Waltz was not so much in vogue till the Regent attained the acme of his popularity. Waltz, the comet, whiskers, and the new government illuminated heaven and earth, in all their glory, much about the same time; of these the comet only has disappeared; the other three continue to astonish us still. — *Printer's Devil.*

Line 166. *New coins.* Amongst others a new ninepence — a creditable coin now forthcoming, worth a pound, in paper, at the fairest calculation.

Line 168. *Jenky.* [Robert Banks Jenkinson, second Earl of Liverpool, Secretary at War and for the Colonies from 1809 to 1812.]

Line 177. *My ——, what say you?* The gentle, or ferocious, reader may fill up the blank as he pleases — there are several dissyllabic names at *his* service, (being already in the Regent's): it would not be fair to back any peculiar initial against the alphabet, as every month will add to the list now entered for the sweepstakes: — a distinguished consonant is said to be the favorite, much against the wishes of the *knowing ones.*

Line 211. *If 'nothing follows all this palming work?'* In Turkey a pertinent, here an impertinent and superfluous, question — literally put, as in the text, by a Persian to Morier, on seeing a waltz in Pera — *Vide* Morier's *Travels.*

Page 277, line 11. '*The Row.*' [Paternoster-row, celebrated for its booksellers.]

Line 25. 'Refreshing.' [This cant phrase was first used in the *Edinburgh Review* — probably by Mr. Jeffrey, says the early editor. — It is a perfectly legitimate use of the word.]

Page 278, line 68. *If you and she marry you'll certainly wrangle.* [Lady Byron was a student of mathematics. Compare *Don Juan*, I. xvi. ff.]

Page 279, line 123. *Renegade's epics, and Botherby's plays.* [Southey and Sotheby. — William Sotheby (1757–1833), author of *Poems* (1790), besides numerous tragedies and translations, was a prominent social figure and member of the Dilettante Society. Byron wrote of him that he 'has imitated everybody, and occasionally surpassed his models.']

Line 125. *The* Old Girl's Review. ['My Grandmother's Review, the British.']

Page 280, line 156. 'Sic me servavit Apollo.' [The closing words of Horace's Satire I. ix. — 'Sotheby is a good man — rhymes well (if not wisely); but is a bore. He seizes you by the button. One night of a rout at Mrs. Hope's, he had fastened upon me — (something about Agamemnon, or Orestes, or some of his plays) notwithstanding my symptoms of manifest distress (for I was in love, and just nicked a minute when neither mothers, nor husbands, nor rivals, nor gossips were near my then idol, who was beautiful as the statues of the gallery where we stood at the time.) — Sotheby, I say, had seized upon me by the button and the heart-strings, and spared neither. William Spencer, who likes fun, and don't dislike mischief, saw my case, and coming up to us both, took me by the hand, and pathetically bade me farewell; "for," said he, "I see it is all over with you." Sotheby then went his way: "*sic me servavit Apollo.*"' — BYRON *Diary*, 1821.]

Page 281, line 59. *'Tis one in 'the Stamps.'* [Wordsworth was collector of stamps for Cumberland and Westmoreland.]

Line 63. *I can have them at Grange's.* Grange is or was a famous pastry-cook in Piccadilly.

Line 77. *That the taste of the actors at best is so so.* ['When I belonged to the Drury Lane Committee, the number of plays upon the shelves were about five hundred. Mr. Sotheby obligingly offered us ALL his tragedies, and I pledged myself, and — notwithstanding many squabbles with my committee brethren — did get *Ivan* accepted, read, and the parts distributed. But lo! in the very heart of the matter, upon some *tepid*-ness on the part of Kean, or warmth on that of the author, Sotheby withdrew his play.' — BYRON *Diary*, 1821.]

Page 282, line 80. '*And fear,*' *as the Greek says: for* '*purging the mind.*' [Aristotle's famous canon in the *Poetics.*]

Line 116. *Sir George.* [Sir George Beaumont, a constant friend of Mr. Wordsworth.]

Line 117. *My Lord Seventy-four.* [James, the first Earl of Lonsdale, offered to build, and completely furnish and man, a ship of seventy-four guns, towards the close of the American war.]

Line 119. *The poet, who, singing of pedlers and asses.* [Compare *Don Juan*, III. C.]

Page 283, lines 144, 145. *Sir Humphry* — Duke *Humphry.* [Sir Humphry Davy.]

Line 155. *Miss Diddle.* [Miss Lydia White, whose hospitable functions were open to the circle of London artists and literati. The name in the text must have been suggested by the jingling resemblance it bears to *Lydia.*]

Page 285, line 57. *In the first year of freedom's second dawn.* [George III. died the 29th of January, 1820, — a year in which the revolutionary spirit broke out all over the south of Europe.]

Page 286, line 92. *Unless he left a German will.* [Byron alludes to an idle story about George III., that he had secreted and destroyed the testament of George II.]

Page 287, line 157. *St. Bartholomew.* [Tradition states that he was flayed alive and then crucified head downwards.]

Page 288, line 216. *By Captain Parry's crew, in* '*Melville's Sound.*' [See Captain Edward Parry's Voyage, in 1819–20, for the Discovery of a northwest passage. — 'I believe it is almost impossible for words to give an idea of the beauty and variety which this magnificent phenomenon displayed. The luminous arch had broken into irregular masses, streaming with much rapidity in different directions, varying continually in shape and interest, and extending themselves from north, by the east, to north, etc.']

Line 224. *Johanna Southcote.* [The aged lunatic, who fancied herself, and was believed by many followers, to be with child of a new Messiah, died in 1815.]

Page 290, line 364. *Apicius' board.* [A noted epicure of the time of Augustus and Tiberius, and author of a cook book. Though very rich, he poisoned himself from fear of starving to death.]

Page 291, line 426. *It being a sort of knighthood, or gilt key.* [A gold or gilt key, peeping from below the skirts of the coat, marks a lord chamberlain.]

Line 440. *If that the* summer *is not too severe.* [An allusion to Horace Walpole's expression in a letter — 'the summer has set in with *its usual severity*.']

Page 294, line 609. *Another, that he was a duke, or knight.* [Among the various persons to whom the Letters of Junius have been attributed, we find the Duke of Portland, Lord George Sackville, Sir Philip Francis, Mr. Burke, Mr. Dunning, the Rev. John Horne Tooke, Mr. Hugh Boyd, Dr. Wilmot, etc.]

Page 295, line 667. '*Nominis Umbra.*' [The motto of Junius is, *Stat nominis umbra.*]

Line 685. *Skiddaw.* [Southey's residence was on the shore of Derwentwater, near the mountain Skiddaw.]

Page 296, line 728. Non Di, non homines. [*Non homines, non di*, HORACE, *Ars Poet.*, 372, thus translated by Martin: —

> 'But gods, and men, and booksellers refuse
> To countenance a mediocre Muse.']

Line 736. Pye *come again.* [Henry James Pye, the predecessor of Southey in the poet-laureateship, died in 1813.]

Page 297, line 773. *Pantisocracy.* [The equal rule of all: the well-known utopian government which Coleridge, Southey, and others planned to establish in America.]

Line 779. *Reviewing* '*the ungentle craft.*' See *Life of Henry Kirke White.*

Line 807. *Like King Alfonso.* [Alfonso X., 'The Wise' (1252–1284).] Alfonso, speaking of the Ptolomean system, said, that 'had he been consulted at the creation of the world, he would have spared the Maker some absurdities.'

Line 816. *Off from his* '*melodious twang.*' See Aubrey's account of the apparition which disappeared 'with a curious perfume and a *most melodious twang.*' [In 1696 John Aubrey published *Miscellanies*, a collection of ghost stories.]

Page 298, lines 19, 20. *A few feet Of sullen earth divide.* [The grave of Fox, in Westminster Abbey, is within eighteen inches of that of Pitt.]

Line 31. *Though Alexander's urn a show be grown.* [A sarcophagus, of breccia, supposed to have contained the dust of Alexander, which came into the possession of the English army, in consequence of the capitulation of Alexandria, in February, 1802, was presented by George III. to the British Museum.]

Page 299, line 64. *A surgeon's statement and an earl's harangues!* [Mr. Barry O'Meara was surgeon to Napoleon at St. Helena. — The Earl of Bathurst defended the government in their treatment of Napoleon, which was assailed by Lord Holland in the House of Lords, in 1817.]

Line 65. *A bust delay'd.* [The bust of his son.]

Line 69. *The paltry gaoler.* [Sir Hudson Lowe.]

Line 70. *The staring stranger with his note-book nigh.* [Captain Basil Hall's interesting account of his interview with the ex-emperor occurs in his *Voyage to Loo-choo.*]

Line 79. *And the stiff surgeon, who maintain'd his cause.* [O'Meara made charges that Sir Hudson Lowe had prompted him to poison Napoleon. Byron seems to have credited the accusation.]

Line 88. *And higher worlds than this are his again.* [Buonaparte died the 5th of May, 1821.]

Page 300, line 128. *Like Guesclin's dust.* [Guesclin, constable of France, died in the midst of his triumphs, before Châteauneuf de Randon, in 1380. The English garrison, which had conditioned to surrender at a certain time, marched out the day after his death; and the commander respectfully laid the keys of the fortress on the bier, so that it might appear to have surrendered to his ashes.]

Line 130. *Like Ziska's drum.* [John Ziska (1360–1424), a distinguished leader of the Hussites. It is recorded of him, that, in dying, he ordered his skin to be made the covering of a drum.]

Line 145. *While the dark shades of forty ages stood.* [At the battle of the pyramids, in July, 1798, Buonaparte said, — 'Soldiers! from the summit of yonder pyramids forty ages behold you.']

Line 169. *Moscow's minarets.* [Referring to the attempt of Charles XII., in 1709, to reach Moscow.]

Page 301, line 203. *Lutzen, where fell the Swede of victory.* [Gustavus Adolphus fell at the battle of Lutzen, in 1632.]

Line 217. *And thou Isle.* [The Isle of Elba.]

Line 227. *Hear! hear Prometheus.* I refer the reader to the first address of Prometheus in Æschylus.

Line 248. *Freedom and peace to that which boasts his birth.* [The celebrated motto on a French medal of Franklin was, — 'Eripuit cælo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis.']

Page 303, line 359. '*Iago! and close Spain!*' ['Santiago y serra España!' the old Spanish warcry.]

Line 369. *Waving her more than Amazonian blade.* [See note on the Maid of Saragossa, page 12, line 558.]

Line 378. *But lo! a Congress!* [The Congress of the Sovereigns of Russia, Austria, Prussia, etc., which assembled at Verona, in the autumn of 1822.]

Line 384. *Henry.* [Patrick Henry, of Virginia.]

Line 419. *Whose old laurels yield to new.* [Ippolito Pindemonte.]

Line 422. *Thy good old man.* [Claudian's famous old man of Verona, 'qui suburbium nunquam egressus est.']

Page 304, line 449. *Pulks.* [Lapland traveling sledges.]

Line 461. *Many an old woman, but no Catherine.* [The dexterity of Catherine extricated Peter (called the Great by courtesy), when surrounded by the Mussulmans on the banks of the river Pruth.]

Line 464. *Fatal to Goths are Xeres' sunny fields.* [At Xeres, in 711, Roderic, the last Gothic sovereign of Spain, was defeated by the Saracens.]

Line 481. *His tub hath tougher walls than Sinope.* [Sinope, on the Euxine, the birthplace of the cynic Diogenes.]

Line 501. *In saying eloquence meant 'Action, action!'* [The word is ὑπόκρισις, and means rather all the art of the actor. — The story is told in Plutarch's *Lives of the Ten Orators.*]

Page 305, line 514. *Calm Hartwell's green abode.* [Hartwell, in Buckinghamshire — the residence of Louis XVIII. during the latter years of the Emigration.]

Line 535. *That nose, the hook where he suspends the world.*

> Naso suspendit adunco. — HORACE, *Satires.*

The Roman applies it to one who merely was imperious to his acquaintance.

Line 540. '*Pilots who have weather'd every storm.*' ['The Pilot that weather'd the storm' is the burthen of a song, in honor of Pitt, by Canning.]

Page 307, line 715. *And subtle Greeks.* [Count Capo d'Istrias, afterwards President of Greece.]

Page 308, line 730. *The young Astyanax of modern Troy.* [Napoleon François Charles Joseph, Duke of Reichstadt, died at the palace of Schönbrunn, July 22, 1832, having just attained his twenty-first year.]

Line 741. *The martial Argus.* [Count Neipperg, chamberlain and second husband to Maria Louisa, had but one eye.]

Line 768. *She caught Sir William Curtis in a kilt!* [George the Fourth is said to have been somewhat annoyed, on entering the levee room at Holyrood (August, 1822) in full Stuart tartan, to see only one figure similarly attired (and of similar bulk) — that of Sir William Curtis.]

Page 310, line 3. *That tomb which, gleaming o'er the cliff.* A tomb above the rocks on the promontory, by some supposed the sepulchre of Themistocles.

Line 22. *Sultana of the nightingale.* The attachment of the nightingale to the rose is a well-known Persian fable. If I mistake not, the 'Bulbul of a thousand tales' is one of his appellations.

Page 311, line 151. *Slaves — nay, the bondsmen of a slave.* Athens is the property of the Kislar Aga (the slave of the seraglio and guardian of the women), who appoints the Waywode. A pander and eunuch — these are not polite, yet true appellations — now *governs* the *Governor* of Athens!

Page 312, line 225. *Tophaike.* Musket. — The Bairam is announced by the cannon at sunset; the illumination of the Mosques, and the firing of all kinds of small arms, loaded with *ball*, proclaim it during the night.

Line 228. *Rhamazani.* [A month of fasting, followed by the Bairam.]

Line 251. *Jerreed.* Jerreed, or Djerrid, a blunted Turkish javelin, which is darted from horseback with great force and precision.

Page 313, line 355. *Ataghan.* The ataghan, a long dagger worn with pistols in the belt, in a metal scabbard, generally of silver; and, among the wealthier, gilt, or of gold.

Line 357. *An Emir by his garb of green.* Green is the privileged colour of the Prophet's numerous pretended descendants; with them, as here, faith (the family inheritance) is supposed to supersede the necessity of good works: they are the worst of a very indifferent brood.

Page 314, line 389. *The insect-queen of eastern spring.* The blue-winged butterfly of Kashmeer, the most rare and beautiful of the species.

Line 423. *Is like the Scorpion girt by fire.* Alluding to the dubious suicide of the scorpion, so placed for experiment by gentle philosophers. Some maintain that the position of the sting, when turned towards the head, is merely a convulsive movement; but others have actually brought in the verdict 'Felo de se.'

Page 315, line 468. *Phingari.* The moon.

Line 479. *Bright as the jewel of Giamschid.* The celebrated fabulous ruby of Sultan Giamschid, the embellisher of Istakhar; from its splendour, named Schebgerag, 'the torch of night;' also 'the cup of the sun,' etc. [Compare the line in FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát:* 'And Jamshyd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one knows.']

Line 483. *Though on Al-Sirat's arch I stood.* Al-Sirat, the bridge of breadth, narrower than the thread of a famished spider, and sharper than the edge of a sword, over which the Mussulmans must skate into Paradise to which it is the only entrance; but this is not the worst, the river beneath being hell itself, into which, as may be expected, the unskilful and tender of foot contrive to tumble with a 'facilis descensus Averni' not very pleasing in prospect to the next passenger. There is a shorter cut downwards for the Jews and Christians.

Line 506. *Franguestan!* Circassia.

Page 316, line 568. *Bismillah!* 'In the name of God;' the commencement of all the chapters of the Koran but one, and of prayer and thanksgiving.

Line 571. *Chiaus.* [A Turkish messenger or interpreter.]

Line 593. *Then curl'd his very beard with ire.* A phenomenon not uncommon with an angry Mussulman. In 1809, the Capitan Pacha's whiskers at a diplomatic audience were no less lively with indignation than a tiger cat's, to the horror of all the dragomans.

Line 603. *The craven cry, Amaun!* Quarter, pardon.

Line 666. *Palampore.* The flowered shawls generally worn by persons of rank.

Page 317, line 717. *Calpac.* The solid cap or centre part of the head-dress; the shawl is wound round it, and forms the turban.

Line 734. '*Alla Hu!*' The concluding words of the Muezzin's call to prayer from the highest gallery on the exterior of the Minaret.

Line 743. *Their kerchiefs green they wave.* The following is part of a battle-song of the Turks: 'I see — I see a dark-eyed girl of Paradise, and she waves a handkerchief, a kerchief of green; and cries aloud, "Come, kiss me, for I love thee,"' etc.

Line 748. *Monkir's scythe.* Monkir and Nekir are the inquisitors of the dead, before whom the corpse undergoes a slight novitiate and preparatory training for damnation. If the answers are none of the clearest, he is hauled up with a scythe and thumped down with a red-hot mace till properly seasoned, with a variety of subsidiary probations. The office of these angels is no sinecure; there are but two, and the number of orthodox deceased being in a small proportion to the remainder, their hands are always full.

Page 318, line 787. *Caloyer.* [A monk, from the new Greek καλόγερος, a good old man.]

Line 832. *Dark and unearthly is the scowl.* [The remaining lines, about five hundred in number, were, with the exception of the last sixteen, all added to the poem, either during its first progress through the press, or in subsequent editions.]

Page 322, line 1273. *Symar.* A shroud.

Page 323, line 1. *Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle.* [These opening lines are supposed to have been suggested by Goethe's song in *Wilhelm Meister:* Kennst du das Land wo die citronen blühn.]

Line 8. *Gúl.* The rose.

Page 324, line 72. *With Mejnoun's tale.* Mejnoun and Leila, the Romeo and Juliet of the East.

Line 73. *Tambour.* Turkish drum, which sounds at sunrise, noon, and twilight.

Page 325, line 144. *He is an Arab to my sight.* The Turks abhor the Arabs (who return the compliment a hundred-fold) even more than they hate the Christians.

Page 326, line 201. *The line of Carasman.* Carasman Oglou, or Kara Osman Oglou, is the principal landowner in Turkey; he governs Magnesia: those who, by a kind of feudal tenure, possess land on condition of service, are called Timariots: they serve as Spahis, according to the extent of territory, and bring a certain number into the field, generally cavalry.

Line 213. *And teach the messenger what fate.* When a Pacha is sufficiently strong to resist, the single messenger, who is always the first bearer of the order for his death, is strangled instead, and sometimes five or six, one after the other, on the same errand, by command of the refractory patient; if, on the contrary, he is weak or loyal, he bows, kisses the Sultan's respectable signature, and is bow-strung with great complacency.

Line 233. *Chibouque.* The Turkish pipe, of which the amber mouth-piece, and sometimes the ball which contains the leaf, is adorned with precious stones, if in possession of the wealthier orders

Line 235. *Maugrabee.* Moorish mercenaries.

Line 236. *Delis.* Bravos who form the forlorn hope of the cavalry, and always begin the action.

Line 251. *Ollahs.* 'Ollahs,' Alla il Allah, the 'Leilies,' as the Spanish poets call them; the sound is Ollah; a cry of which the Turks, for a silent people, are somewhat profuse, particularly during the jerreed, or in the chase, but mostly in battle

Page 327, line 358. *Within the caves of Istakar.* The treasures of the Pre-Adamite Sultans. See D'Herbelot, article *Istakar.*

Line 374. *A Musselim's control.* A governor, the next in rank after a Pacha; a Waywode is the third; and then come the Agas.

Line 375. *Egripo.* The Negropont. According to the proverb the Turks of Egripo, the Jews of Salonica, and the Greeks of Athens, are the worst of their respective races.

Page 328, line 449. *Tchocadar.* One of the attendants who precedes a man of authority.

Page 329, line 47. *Which Ammon's son ran proudly round.* [Before the invasion of Persia, Alexander, deeming himself a descendant of Achilles, placed garlands on the tomb of the latter, and ran naked around it.]

Line 65. *The fragrant beads of amber.* When rubbed, the amber is susceptible of a perfume, which is slight but *not* disagreeable.

Line 72. *Comboloio.* A Turkish rosary.

Page 330, line 150. *Galiongée.* 'Galiongée'—or Galiongi, a sailor, that is, a Turkish sailor; the Greeks navigate, the Turks work the guns.

Page 331, line 220. *Paswan's rebel hordes.* Paswan Oglou, the rebel of Widin, who, for the last years of his life, set the whole power of the Porte at defiance.

Line 232. *They gave their horse-tails to the wind.* 'Horse-tail,' the standard of a Pacha.

Page 333, line 380. *Lambro's patriots.* Lambro Canzani, a Greek, famous for his efforts in 1789–90 for the independence of his country; abandoned by the Russians, he became a pirate, and the Archipelago was the scene of his enterprises. He and Riga are the two most celebrated of the Greek revolutionists.

Line 384. *Rayahs.* All who pay the capitation tax, called the 'Haratch.'

Line 388. *Let me like the ocean-Patriarch roam.* [Noah.]

Line 409. *Aden.* 'Jannat al Aden,' the perpetual abode, the Mussulman paradise.

Line 431. *He makes a solitude, and calls it—peace!* [Translated from the famous words in Tacitus' *Agricola.*]

Page 335, line 618. *And mourn'd above his turban stone.* A turban is carved in stone above the graves of *men* only.

Line 627. *The loud Wul-wulleh.* The death-song of the Turkish women. The 'silent slaves' are the men, whose notions of decorum forbid complaint in *public.*

Page 336, line 712. *Into Zuleika's name.* 'And airy tongues that *syllable* men's names.'—MILTON [*Comus*]. For a belief that the souls of the dead inhabit the form of birds, we need not travel to the East. Lord Lyttleton's ghost story, the belief of the Duchess of Kendal, that George I. flew into her window in the shape of a raven (see Orford's *Reminiscence*), and many other instances, bring this superstition nearer home.

Page 344, line 440. *Of fair Olympia loved and left of old.* *Orlando Furioso,* Canto x.

Page 347, line 33. *The sober berry's juice* Coffee.

Line 35. *Chibouque's dissolving cloud.* Pipe.

Line 36. *Almas.* Dancing girls.

Page 348, line 68. *Saick.* [A Turkish or Grecian vessel.]

Page 349, line 160. *Zatanai.* Satan.

Page 350, line 225. *Gulnare.* A female name; means, literally, the flower of the pomegranate.

Page 353, line 451. *Till even the scaffold echoes with their jest!* In Sir Thomas More, for instance, on the scaffold, and Anne Boleyn, in the Tower, when grasping her neck, she remarked, that it 'was too slender to trouble the headsman much.' During one part of the French Revolution, it became a fashion to leave some 'mot' as a legacy; and the quantity of facetious last words spoken during that period would form a melancholy jest-book of a considerable size.

Page 355, line 1. *Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run.* The opening lines as far as section II. have, perhaps, little business here, and were annexed to an unpublished (though printed) poem; but they were written on the spot in the spring of 1811, and — I scarce know why — the reader must excuse their appearance here if he can. [Compare the beginning of *The Curse of Minerva*, which was published later than the present poem.]

Page 357, line 139. His *only bends in seeming o'er his beads.* The combolois, or Mohametan rosary; the beads are in number ninety-nine.

Page 364, line 605. *And the cold flowers her colder hand contain'd.* In the Levant it is the custom to strew flowers on the bodies of the dead, and in the hands of young persons to place a nosegay.

Page 366, line 1. *The Serfs are glad.* The reader is apprised, that the name of Lara being Spanish, and no circumstance of local and natural description fixing the scene or hero of the poem to any country or age, the word 'Serf,' which could not be correctly applied to the lower classes in Spain, who were never vassals of the soil, has nevertheless been employed to designate the followers of our fictitious chieftain. [Byron elsewhere intimates, that he meant Lara for a chief of the Morea.]

Page 385, line 77. *Spahi's bands.* [See note on *The line of Carasman*, page 326, line 201.]

Page 386, line 141. *Coumourgi.* Ali Coumourgi, the favourite of three sultans, and Grand Vizier to Achmet III. after recovering Peloponnesus from the Venetians in one campaign, was mortally wounded in the next, against the Germans, at the battle of Peterwaradin (in the plain of Carlowitz), in Hungary, endeavouring to rally his guards. He died of his wounds next day. His last order was the decapitation of General Breuner, and some other German prisoners; and his last words, 'Oh, that I could thus serve all the Christian dogs!' a speech and act not unlike one of Caligula. He was a young man of great ambition and unbounded presumption: on being told that Prince Eugene, then opposed to him, 'was a great general,' he said, 'I shall become a greater, and at his expense.'

Page 389, line 460. *And their white tusks crunch'd o'er the whiter skull.* This spectacle I have seen, such as described, beneath the wall of the Seraglio at Constantinople, in the little cavities worn by the Bosphorus in the rock, a narrow terrace of which projects between the wall and the water.

Line 469. *And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair.* This tuft, or long lock, is left from a superstition that Mahomet will draw them into Paradise by it.

Page 390, line 522. *Sent that soft and tender moan.* I must here acknowledge a close though unintentional resemblance in these twelve lines to a passage in an unpublished poem of Mr. Coleridge, called *Christabel*. It was not till after these lines were written that I heard that wild and singularly original and beautiful poem recited; and the MS. of that production I never saw till very recently, by the kindness of Mr. Coleridge himself, who, I hope, is convinced that I have not been a wilful plagiarist. The original idea undoubtedly pertains to Mr. Coleridge, whose poem has been composed above fourteen years. Let me conclude by a hope that he will not longer delay the publication of a production, to which I can only add my mite of approbation to the applause of far more competent judges. [The following are the lines in *Christabel* which Byron unintentionally imitated: —

'The night is chill, the forest bare,
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek —
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks at the sky.']

Page 391, line 643. *There is a light cloud by the moon.* I have been told that the idea expressed in this and the five following lines has been admired by those whose approbation is valuable. I am glad of it: but it is not original — at least not mine; it may be found much better expressed in pages in 182–3–4 of the English version of *Vathek* (I forget the precise page of the French), a work to which I have before referred; and never recur to, or read, without a renewal of gratification. The following is the passage: '"Deluded prince!" said the Genius, addressing the Caliph, "to whom Providence hath confided the care of innumerable subjects; is it thus that thou fulfillest thy mission? Thy crimes are already completed; and art thou now hastening to thy punishment? Thou knowest that beyond those mountains Eblis and his accursed dives hold their infernal empire; and, seduced by a malignant phantom, thou art proceeding to surrender thyself to them! This moment is the last of grace allowed thee: give back Nouronahar to her father, who still retains a few sparks of life: destroy thy tower, with all its abominations: drive Carathis from thy councils: be just to thy subjects:

respect the ministers of the prophet: compensate for thy impieties by an exemplary life; and, instead of squandering thy days in voluptuous indulgence, lament thy crimes on the sepulchres of thy ancestors. Thou beholdest the clouds that obscure the sun: at the instant he recovers his splendour, if thy heart be not changed, the time of mercy assigned thee will be past forever.”’ [Byron was throughout his life morbidly sensitive of any charge or suspicion of plagiarism.]

Page 392, line 688. *The horsetails are pluck'd from the ground.* The horsetails, fixed upon a lance, a pacha's standard.

Line 717. *He who first downs with the red cross.* [‘What vulgarism is this! —
He who first *lowers*, — or *plucks down*,’ etc. — Gifford.]

Page 393, line 805. *And since the day, when in the strait.* In the naval battle at the mouth of the Dardanelles, between the Venetians and Turks.

Page 396, line 1069. *The jackal's troop.* I believe I have taken a poetical license to transplant the jackal from Asia. In Greece I never saw nor heard these animals; but among the ruins of Ephesus I have heard them by hundreds. They haunt ruins, and follow armies.

Line 14. *As twilight melts beneath the moon away.* The lines contained in this section were printed as set to music some time since, but belonged to the poem where they now appear, the greater part of which was composed prior to *Lara.*

Page 402. The Prisoner of Chillon. When this poem was composed, I was not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonnivard, or I should have endeavoured to dignify the subject by an attempt to celebrate his courage and his virtues. With some account of his life I have been furnished, by the kindness of a citizen of that republic, which is still proud of the memory of a man worthy of the best age of ancient freedom: —

‘François de Bonnivard, fils de Louis de Bonnivard, originaire de Seyssel et Seigneur de Lunes, naquit en 1496. Il fit ses études à Turin: en 1510 Jean Aimé de Bonnivard, son oncle, lui résigna le prieuré de St. Victor, qui aboutissait aux murs de Genève, et qui formait un bénéfice considérable.

‘Ce grand homme — (Bonnivard mérite ce titre par la force de son âme, la droiture de son cœur, la noblesse de ses intentions, la sagesse de ses conseils, le courage de ses démarches, l'étendue de ses connaissances et la vivacité de son esprit), — ce grand homme, qui excitera l'admiration de tous ceux qu'une vertu héroique peut encore émouvoir, inspirera encore la plus vive reconnaissance dans les cœurs des Genevois qui aiment Genève. Bonnivard en fut toujours un des plus fermes appuis: pour assurer la liberté de notre république, il ne craignit pas de perdre souvent la sienne; il oublia son repos; il méprisa les richesses; il ne négligea rien pour affermir le bonheur d'une patrie qu'il honora de son choix: dès ce moment il la chérit comme le plus zélé de ses citoyens; il la servit avec l'intrépidité d'un héros, et il écrivit son Histoire avec la naïveté d'un philosophe et la chaleur d'un patriote.

‘Il dit dans le commencement de son *Histoire de Genève*, que *dès qu'il eut commencé de lire l'histoire des nations, il se sentit entrainé par son goût pour les républiques, dont il épousa toujours les intérêts;* c'est ce goût pour la liberté qui lui fit sans doute adopter Genève pour sa patrie.

‘Bonnivard, encore jeune, s'annonça hautement comme le défenseur de Genève contre le Duc de Savoye et l'Evêque.

‘En 1519, Bonnivard devint le martyr de sa patrie; le Duc de Savoye étant entré dans Genève avec cinq cents hommes, Bonnivard craignit le ressentiment du Duc; il voulut se retirer à Fribourg pour en éviter les suites; mais il fut trahi par deux hommes qui l'accompagnaient, et conduit par ordre du Prince à Grolée, où il resta prisonnier pendant deux ans. Bonnivard était malheureux dans ses voyages: comme ses malheurs n'avaient point ralenti son zèle pour Genève, il était toujours un ennemi redoutable pour ceux qui la menaçaient, et par conséquent il devait être exposé à leurs coups. Il fut rencontré en 1530 sur le Jura par des voleurs, qui le dépouillèrent, et qui le mirent encore entre les mains du Duc de Savoye: ce prince le fit enfermer dans le Château de Chillon, où il resta sans être interrogé jusque en 1536; il fut alors délivré par les Bernois, qui s'emparèrent du Pays de Vaud.

‘Bonnivard, en sortant de sa captivité, eut le plaisir de trouver Genève libre et réformée: la république s'empressa de lui témoigner sa reconnaissance, et de le dédommager des maux qu'il avait soufferts; elle le reçut bourgeois de la ville au mois de juin, 1536; elle lui donna la maison habitée autrefois par le Vicaire-général, et elle lui assigna une pension de deux cents écus d'or tant qu'il séjournerait à Genève. Il fut admis dans le Conseil des Deux-Cents en 1537 . . .

‘Il parait que Bonnivard mourut en 1570; mais on ne peut l'assurer, parcequ'il y a une lacune dans le Nécrologe depuis le mois de juillet, 1570, jusqu'en 1571.’ [Senebier, *Histoire Littéraire de Genève.*]

Lines 2, 3. *Nor grew it white In a single night.* Ludovico Sforza, and others. The same is asserted of Marie Antoinette's, the wife of Louis XVI., though not in quite so short a period. Grief is said to have the same effect: to such, and not to fear, this change in *hers* was to be attributed.

Page 403, line 111. *Chillon's snow-white battlement.* The Chateau de Chillon is situated between Clarens and Villeneuve, which last is at one extremity of the Lake of Geneva. On its left are the entrances of the Rhone, and opposite are the heights of the Meillerie and the range of Alps above Boveret and St. Gingo. Near it, on a hill behind, is a torrent: below it, washing its walls, the lake has been fathomed to the depth of 800 feet, French measure: within it are a range of dungeons, in which the early reformers, and subsequently prisoners of state, were confined. Across one of the vaults is a beam black with age, on which we were informed that the condemned were formerly executed. In the cells are seven pillars, or, rather, eight, one being half merged in the wall; in some of these are rings for the fetters and the fettered: in the pavement the steps of Bonnivard have left their traces. He was confined here several years. It is by this castle that Rousseau has fixed the catastrophe of his Héloïse, in the rescue of one of her children by Julie from the water; the shock of which, and the illness produced by the immersion, is the cause of her death. The chateau is large, and seen along the lake for a great distance. The walls are white.

Page 406, line 341. *And then there was a little isle.* Between the entrances of the Rhone and Villeneuve, not far from Chillon, is a very small island; the only one I could perceive, in my voyage round and over the lake, within its circumference. It contains a few trees (I think not above three), and from its singleness and diminutive size has a peculiar effect upon the view.

Page 407, line 56. *Hetman.* [A Cossack chief.]

Page 408, line 129. *John Casimir.* [He was proclaimed king of Poland in 1649.]

Line 157. *Rich as a salt or silver mine.* This comparison of a '*salt* mine' may, perhaps, be permitted to a Pole, as the wealth of the country consists greatly in the salt mines.

Page 417, line 101. '*Brandy for heroes!*' [It appears to have been Dr. Johnson who thus gave honour to Cognac. — 'He was persuaded,' says Boswell, 'to take one glass of claret. He shook his head, and said, "Poor stuff! — No, Sir, claret is the liquor for boys; port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero (smiling) must drink brandy."' — CROKER's *Boswell*, iv. 252.]

Page 419, line 1. *How pleasant were the songs of Toobonai.* The first three sections are taken from an actual song of the Tonga Islanders, of which a prose translation is given in *Mariner's Account of the Tonga Islands.* Toobonai is *not* however one of them; but was one of those where Christian and the mutineers took refuge. I have altered and added, but have retained as much as possible of the original.

Page 421, line 182. *The desert-ship.* The Oriental figure for the camel or dromedary.

Line 193. *Had form'd his glorious namesake's counterpart.* The consul Nero who made the unequalled march which deceived Hannibal, and defeated Hasdrubal.

Page 423, line 291. *And Loch-na-gar with Ida look'd o'er Troy.* When very young, about eight years of age, after an attack of the scarlet fever at Aberdeen, I was removed by medical advice into the Highlands. Here I passed occasionally some summers, and from this period I date my love of mountainous countries. I can never forget the effect, a few years afterwards, in England, of the only thing I had long seen, even in miniature, of a mountain, in the Malvern Hills. After I returned to Cheltenham, I used to watch them every afternoon, at sunset, with a sensation which I cannot describe. This was boyish enough; but I was then only thirteen years of age, and it was in the holidays. [Compare the verses entitled *Lachin y Gair*, page 117.]

Page 424, line 407. *Than breathes his mimic murmurer in the shell.* [Byron alludes in a note to the celebrated passage on the sea-shell in Landor's *Gebir.*]

Page 425, line 447. *Sailor or philosopher.* Hobbes, the father of Locke's and other philosophy, was an inveterate smoker, — even to pipes beyond computation.

Page 426, line 531. '*That will do for the marines.*' 'That will do for the marines, but the sailors won't believe it,' is an old saying; and one of the few fragments of former jealousies which still survive (in jest only) between these gallant services.

Page 427, line 52. *No less of human bravery than the brave!* Archidamus, king of Sparta, and son of Agesilaus, when he saw a machine invented for the casting of stones and darts, exclaimed that it was the 'grave of valour.' The same story has been told of some knights on the first application of gunpowder; but the original anecdote is in Plutarch.

Page 431, line 121. *Around she pointed to a spacious cave.* Of this cave (which is no fiction) the original will be found in the ninth chapter of *Mariner's Account of the Tonga Islands.* I have taken the poetical liberty to transplant it to Toobonai, the last island where any distinct account is left of Christian and his comrades.

Page 433, line 226. *The kindling ashes to his kindled breast.* The tradition is attached to the story of Eloïsa, that when her body was lowered into the grave of Abelard (who had been buried twenty years), he opened his arms to receive her.

Page 434, line 334. *He tore the topmost button from his vest.* In Thibault's account of Frederic the Second of Prussia, there is a singular relation of a young Frenchman, who with his mistress appeared to be of some rank. He enlisted and deserted at Schweidnitz; and after a desperate resistance was retaken, having killed an officer, who attempted to seize him after he was wounded, by the discharge of his musket loaded with a *button* of his uniform. Some circumstances on his court-martial raised a great interest amongst his judges, who wished to discover his real situation in life, which he offered to disclose, but to the *king* only, to whom he requested permission to write. This was refused, and Frederic was filled with the greatest indignation, from baffled curiosity, or some other motive, when he understood that his request had been denied.

Page 437, line 33. *My pleasant task is done.* [The *Gerusalemme Liberata.*]

Line 49. *Oh Leonora! wilt not thou reply?* [Leonora d'Este, sister of the sovereign who imprisoned him from 1579 to 1586. It is not now commonly believed that Tasso suffered for this supposed love of the princess.]

Page 444, line 291. *A* 'Cortejo.' Cortejo is pronounced Corte*ho*, with an aspirate, according to the Arabesque guttural. It means what there is as yet no precise name for in England, though the practice is as common as in any tramontane country whatever.

Page 445, line 363. *Raphael, who died in thy embrace.* [Raphael died in 1520, according to a tradition *vagis amoribus delectatus*.]

Page 446, line 368. *While yet Canova can create below.*

(In talking thus, the writer, more especially
Of women, would be understood to say,
He speaks as a spectator, not officially,
And always, reader, in a modest way;
Perhaps, too, in no very great degree shall he
Appear to have offended in this lay,
Since, as all know, without the sex, our sonnets
Would seem unfinish'd, like their untrimm'd bonnets.)
(Signed) PRINTER'S DEVIL.

Line 369. '*England! with all thy faults I love thee still.*' [Cowper, *The Task*, ii. 206.]

Line 401. *Oh that I had the art of easy writing.* ['But easy writing's curst hard reading.' — SHERIDAN.]

Page 449, line 575. *No bustling Botherbys.* [Compare the satire *The Blues*.]

Page 454, lines 127, 128. *Holland deigns to own A sceptre.* [The Prince of Orange received the title of King of the Netherlands in 1814.]

Page 457, line 68. *And doom this body forfeit to the fire.* [On the 27th of January, 1302, Dante was mulcted eight thousand lire, and condemned to two years' banishment; and in case the fine was not paid, his goods were to be confiscated. On the 11th of March, the same year, he was sentenced to a punishment due only to the most desperate of malefactors. The decree, that he and his associates in exile should be burned. if they fell into the hands of their enemies, was first discovered, in 1772, by the Conte Ludovico Savioli.]

Page 458, line 172. *And that fatal she.* [Gemma, Dante's wife, by whom he had seven children, did not follow him into exile; but there is no sufficient reason to suppose she was anything but a faithful and good wife. One feels throughout the poem that Byron is thinking a little too much of himself and his own exile.]

Page 459, line 91. *Nine moons shall rise o'er scenes like this.* [Referring to this siege and capture of Rome by the Constable of Bourbon, who himself perished in the assault.]

Page 461, line 46. *Conquerors on foreign shores and the far wave.* Alexander of Parmea, Spinola, Pescara, Eugene of Savoy, Montecucco.

Line 47. *Discoverers of new worlds.* Columbus, Americus Vespucius, Sebastian Cabot.

Line 80. *He who once enters in a tyrant's hall.* [Words from Sophocles quoted by Pompey on taking his last leave of his wife and son.]

Line 83. *A captive, sees his half of manhood gone.* [*Odyssey*, xvii. 322.]

Page 464, line 67. *The stream of his great thoughts shall spring from me.* [It is well known that Michael Angelo greatly admired Dante. His copy of Dante with illustrations on the broad margins was lost at sea.]

Line 87. *Her charms to pontiffs proud.* See the treatment of Michael Angelo by Julius II., and his neglect by Leo X.

Page 465, line 141. '*What have I done to thee, my people?*' ['Populo mi, quid feci tibi?' — the beginning of one of Dante's letters to the people of Florence.]

Page 466, line 34. *If, like Pepin, Charles had had a writer.* [Referring to Saint Boniface who upheld Pepin.]

Line 48. *Giusaffa's.* [The Valley of Jehoshaphat.]

Page 468, line 130. *He took Cortana, and then took Rondell.* [*Cortana*, his sword; *Rondell*, his horse.]

Page 470, line 278. *Macon.* [Another form of Mahound, or Mahomet.]

Page 481, line 192. *When the moon is on the wave.* [These verses were written in Switzerland, in 1816, and transmitted to England for publication, with the third canto of *Childe Harold*. 'As they were written,' says Moore, 'immediately after the last fruitless attempt at reconciliation, it is needless to say who was in the poet's thoughts while he penned some of the opening stanzas.']

Page 482, line 312. *Mix'd with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd.* [The germs of this, and of several other passages in *Manfred*, may be found in the Journal of his Swiss tour, which Lord Byron transmitted to his sister: *e. g.* 'Sept. 19. — Arrived at a lake in the very bosom of the mountains; left our quadrupeds, and ascended further; came to some snow in patches, upon which my forehead's perspiration fell like rain, making the same dents as in a sieve; the chill of the wind and the snow turned me giddy, but I scrambled on and upwards. Hobhouse went to the highest pinnacle. The whole of the mountains superb. A shepherd on a steep and very high cliff playing upon his *pipe;* very different from Arcadia. The music of the cows' *bells* (for their wealth, like the patriarchs', is cattle) in the pastures, which reach to a height far above any mountains in Britain, and the shepherds shouting to us from crag to crag, and playing on their reeds where the steeps appeared almost inaccessible, with the surrounding scenery, realised all that I have ever heard or imagined of a pastoral existence — much more so than Greece or Asia Minor; for there we are a little too much of the sabre and musket order, and if there is a crook in one hand, you are sure to see a gun in the other: but this was pure and unmixed — solitary, savage, and *patriarchal*. As we went, they played "Ranz des Vaches" and other airs, by way of farewell. I have lately repeopled my mind with nature.']

Page 485, lines 95, 96. *The sunbow's rays still arch The torrent.* This iris is formed by the rays of the sun over the lower part of the Alpine torrents: it is exactly like a rainbow come down to pay a visit, and so close that you may walk into it: this effect lasts till noon.

Page 486, lines 186, 187. *He who from out their fountain dwellings raised Eros and Anteros.* [While Jamblicus was bathing with his scholars in the hot baths of Gadara, he summoned up Eros and Anteros from two springs which bore the names of these love-gods.]

Page 487, line 276. *The Spartan Monarch drew.* [The story is related in Plutarch's *Life of Cimon.* Pausanias murdered the virgin Cleonice by mistake in the night, thinking she was an enemy. He was haunted by her image until at Heraclea he invoked her spirit and obtained this information, that 'he would soon be delivered from all his troubles, after his return to Sparta.' The oracle was fulfilled by death.]

Page 491. MANFRED, ACT III., SCENE I. [The third Act, as originally written, being shown to Mr. Gifford, he expressed his unfavorable opinion of it very distinctly; and Mr. Murray transmitted this opinion to Lord Byron. The result is told in the following extracts from his letters: 'Venice, April 14, 1817. — The third Act is certainly d—d bad, and, like the Archbishop of Grenada's homily (which savoured of the palsy), has the dregs of my fever, during which it was written. It must *on no account* be published in its present state. I will try and reform it, or re-write it altogether; but the impulse is gone, and I have no chance of making any thing out of it. The speech of Manfred to the Sun is the only part of this Act I thought good myself; the rest is certainly as bad as bad can be, and I wonder what the devil possessed me. I am very glad indeed that you sent me Mr. Gifford's opinion without *deduction.* Do you suppose me such a booby as not to be very much obliged to him? or that I was not, and am not, convinced and convicted in my conscience of this same overt act of nonsense? I shall try at it again; in the mean time, lay it upon the shelf — the whole Drama I mean. — Recollect *not* to publish, upon pain of I know not what, until I have tried again at the third act. I am not sure that I shall try, and still less that I shall succeed if I do.' — 'Rome, May 5. — I have re-written the greater part, and returned what is not altered in the proof you sent me. The Abbot is become a good man, and the Spirits are brought in at the death. You will find, I think, some good poetry in this new Act, here and there; and if so, print it, without sending me farther proofs, *under Mr. Gifford's correction*, if he will have the goodness to overlook it.']

Line 13. *The sought 'Kalon' found.* [The beautiful, the *summum bonum* of human existence.]

Page 492, line 56. *Against your ordinances? prove and punish!* [Thus far the text stands as originally written. The sequel of the scene, as given in the first MS., is as follows: —

Abbot. Then, hear and tremble! For the headstrong wretch
Who in the mail of innate hardihood
Would shield himself, and battle for his sins,
There is the stake on earth, and beyond earth eternal —
Man. Charity, most reverend father,
Becomes thy lips so much more than this menace,
That I would call thee back to it: but say,
What wouldst thou with me?
Abbot. It may be there are
Things that would shake thee — but I keep them back,
And give thee till to-morrow to repent.
Then if thou dost not all devote thyself
To penance, and with gift of all thy lands
To the monastery —
Man. I understand thee, — well?
Abbot. Expect no mercy; I have warn'd thee.
Man. (*opening the casket*). Stop—
There is a gift for thee within this casket.
[MANFRED *opens the casket, strikes a light, and burns some incense.*
Ho! Ashtaroth!

The DEMON ASHTAROTH *appears, singing as follows:* —

The raven sits
On the raven-stone,
And his black wing flits
O'er the milk-white bone;
To and fro, as the night-winds blow,
The carcass of the assassin swings;
And there alone, on the raven-stone,
The raven flaps his dusky wings.

The fetters creak — and his ebon beak
Croaks to the close of the hollow sound;
And this is the tune, by the light of the moon,
To which the witches dance their round —
Merrily, merrily, cheerily, cheerily,
Merrily, merrily, speeds the ball:
The dead in their shrouds, and the demons in clouds,
Flock to the witches' carnival.

Abbot. I fear thee not — hence — hence —
Avaunt thee, evil one! — help, ho! without there!
Man. Convey this man to the Shreckhorn — to its peak —
To its extremest peak — watch with him there
From now till sunrise; let him gaze, and know
He ne'er again will be so near to heaven.
But harm him not; and, when the morrow breaks,
Set him down safe in his cell — away with him!
Ash. Had I not better bring his brethren too,
Convent and all, to bear him company?
Man. No, this will serve for the present. Take him up.
Ash. Come, friar! now an exorcism or two,
And we shall fly the lighter.

ASHTAROTH *disappears with the* ABBOT, *singing as follows:* —

A prodigal son, and a maid undone,
And a widow re-wedded within the year;
And a worldly monk, and a pregnant nun,
Are things which every day appear.

MANFRED *alone.*

Man. Why would this fool break in on me, and force
My art to pranks fantastical? — no matter,
It was not of my seeking. My heart sickens,
And weighs a fix'd foreboding on my soul:
But it is calm — calm as a sullen sea
After the hurricane; the winds are still,
But the cold waves swell high and heavily,
And there is danger in them. Such a rest
Is no repose. My life hath been a combat,
And every thought a wound, till I am scarr'd
In the immortal part of me. — What now?]

Line 88. *When Rome's sixth emperor was near his last.* [See Suetonius' *Life of Nero*, xlix.]

Page 493, lines 176, 177. *The giant sons Of* *the embrace of angels.* *Genesis*, ch. vi., verses 2 and 4.

Page 494, line 248. *The Lady Astarte, his.* [The drama originally proceeded thus: —

Her. Look — look — the tower —
The tower 's on fire. Oh, heavens and earth! what sound,
What dreadful sound is that? [*A crash like thunder.*
Manuel. Help, help, there! — to the rescue of the
Count, —
The Count 's in danger, — what ho! there! approach!
[*The Servants, Vassals, and Peasantry approach, stupefied with terror.*
If there be any of you who have heart,
And love of human kind, and will to aid
Those in distress — pause not — but follow me —
The portal 's open, follow. [MANUEL *goes in.*
Her. Come — who follows?
What, none of ye? — ye recreants! shiver then
Without. I will not see old Manuel risk
His few remaining years unaided. [HERMAN *goes in.*
Vassal. Hark! —
No — all is silent — not a breath — the flame
Which shot forth such a blaze is also gone:
What may this mean? Let 's enter!
Peasant. Faith, not I, —
Not that, if one, or two, or more, will join,
I then will stay behind; but, for my part,
I do not see precisely to what end.
Vassal. Cease your vain prating — come.
Manuel (*speaking within*). 'T is all in vain —
He 's dead.
Her. (*within*). Not so — even now methought he
moved;
But it is dark — so bear him gently out —
Softly — how cold he is! take care of his temples
In winding down the staircase.

Re-enter MANUEL *and* HERMAN, *bearing* MANFRED *in their arms.*

Manuel. Hie to the castle, some of ye, and bring
What aid you can. Saddle the barb, and speed
For the leech to the city — quick! some water there!
Her. His cheek is black — but there is a faint beat
Still lingering about the heart. Some water.
[*They sprinkle* MANFRED *with water; after a pause, he gives some signs of life.*
Manuel. He seems to strive to speak — come —
cheerly, Count!
He moves his lips — canst hear him? I am old,
And cannot catch faint sounds.
[HERMAN *inclining his head and listening.*
Her. I hear a word
Or two — but indistinctly — what is next?
What 's to be done? let 's bear him to the castle.
[MANFRED *motions with his hand not to remove him.*
Manuel. He disapproves — and 't were of no avail —
He changes rapidly.
Her. 'T will soon be over.
Manuel. Oh what a death is this! that I should live
To shake my grey hairs over the last chief
Of the house of Sigismund! — And such a death!
Alone — we know not how — unshrived — untended —
With strange accompaniments and fearful signs —
I shudder at the sight — but must not leave him.
Man. (*speaking faintly and slowly*). Old man! 't is
not so difficult to die.
[MANFRED, *having said this, expires.*
Her. His eyes are fix'd and lifeless. — He is gone.
Manuel. Close them — My old hand quivers. — He
departs —
Whither? I dread to think — but he is gone.]

Page 500, line 31. *The Avogadori.* [The Avogadori were three in number: they were the conductors of criminal prosecutions on the part of the state; and no act of the councils was valid, unless sanctioned by the presence of one of them.]

Page 501, line 91. *The following words.* ['Marino Faliero, della bella moglie — altri la gode, ed egli la mantiene.' (SANUTO.) — Meaning: 'Marino Faliero, of the fair wife, — another enjoys her, and he maintains her.']

Page 502, line 201. *Dandolo.* [Enrico Dandolo, the great Doge, ruled from 1192 to 1205. When Constantinople was taken by the Crusaders, Dandolo might have been emperor in place of Baldwin of Flanders.]

Page 505, line 379. *The chief of the arsenal.* [This officer was chief of the artisans of the arsenal, and commanded the Bucentaur, for the safety of which, even if an accidental storm should arise, he was responsible with his life. He mounted guard at the ducal palace during an interregnum, and bore the red standard before the new Doge on his inauguration.]

Page 507, line 522. *Saint Mark's shall strike that hour!* The bells of San Marco were never rung but by order of the Doge. One of the pretexts for ringing this alarm was to have been an announcement of the appearance of a Genoese fleet off the Lagune.

Line 535. *The Pozzi and the Piombi.* [The 'wells' and 'leaden roofs' just referred to.]

Page 508, line 601. *Near to the church where sleep my sires.* ['The Doges too were all *buried* in St. Mark's *before* Faliero: it is singular that when his immediate predecessor, *Andrea Dandolo*, died, the ten made a law that *all* the *future* doges *should be buried with their families, in their own churches, — one would think by a kind of presentiment.* So that all that is said of his *Ancestral Doges*, as buried at St. John's and St. Paul's, is altered from the fact, *they being in St. Mark's. Make a note* of this, and put *Editor* as the subscription to it. As I make such pretensions to accuracy, I should not like to be twitted even with such trifles on that score. Of the play they may say what they please, but not so of my costume and *dram. pers.* — they having been real existences.' — BYRON, Letter to Murray, October 12, 1820.]

Page 509, line 59. *The dying Roman said, ''t was but a name.'* [The words of Brutus, according to Dio Cassius.]

Page 520, lines 132, 133. *They think themselves Engaged in secret.* An historical fact.

Page 533, line 352. *San Polo.* The Doge's family palace.

Page 538. BENINTENDE. ['In the notes to *Marino Faliero*, it may be as well to say that *Benintende* was not really of the Ten, but merely *Grand Chancellor*, a separate office, although an important: it was an arbitrary alteration of mine.' — BYRON, Letter to Murray, October 12, 1820.]

Page 539, line 93. *On festal Thursday.* 'Giovedi grasso' — 'fat or greasy Thursday,' — which I cannot literally translate in the text, was the day.

Line 102. *Let their mouths be gagg'd.* Historical fact.

Page 542, line 308. *Conscript fathers.* The Venetian senate took the same title as the Roman, of 'conscript fathers.'

Page 544, lines 450, 451. *Like to the courtesan Who fired Persepolis.* [At the instigation of Thais, Alexander set fire to Persepolis after a revel in 331 B. C.]

Page 548, line 704. *'Tis with age, then.* This was the actual reply of Bailli [Jean Bailly, who was guillotined November 10, 1793], maire of Paris, to a Frenchman who made him the same reproach on his way to execution, in the earliest part of their revolution. I find in reading over (since the completion of this tragedy), for the first time these six years, *Venice Preserved*, a similar reply on a different occasion by Renault, and other coincidences arising from the subject. I need hardly remind the gentlest reader, that such coincidences must be accidental, from the very facility of their detection by reference to so popular a play on the stage and in the closet as Otway's chef-d'œuvre.

Line 754. *When the Hebrew 's in thy palaces.* The chief palaces on the Brenta now belong to the Jews.

Page 549, line 794. *Thou den of drunkards with the blood of princes!* Of the first fifty Doges, *five* abdicated — *five* were banished with their eyes put out — *five* were MASSACRED — and *nine* deposed.

Page 550. SARDANAPALUS. [Byron based his drama on a passage in Diodorus Siculus ii., which reads as follows: 'This prince surpassed all his predecessors in effeminacy, luxury, and cowardice. He never went out of his palace, but spent all his time among a company of women, dressed and painted like them, and employed like them at the distaff. He placed all his happiness and glory in the possession of immense treasures, in feasting and rioting, and indulging himself in all the most infamous and criminal pleasures. He ordered two verses to be put upon his tomb, signifying that he carried away with him all he had eaten, and all the pleasures he had enjoyed, but left everything else behind him — *an epitaph*, says Aristotle, *fit for a hog*. Arbaces, governor of Media, having found means to get into the palace, and having with his own eyes seen Sardanapalus in the midst of his infamous seraglio, enraged at such a spectacle, and not able to endure that so many brave men should be subject to a prince more soft and effeminate than the women themselves, immediately formed a conspiracy against him. Beleses, governor of Babylon, and several others, entered into it. On the first rumour of this revolt, the king hid himself in the inmost part of his palace. Being afterwards obliged to take the field with some forces which he had assembled, he at first gained three successive victories over the enemy, but was afterwards overcome, and pursued to the gates of Nineveh; wherein he shut himself, in hopes the rebels would never be able to take a city so well fortified, and stored with provisions for a considerable time. The siege proved, indeed, of very great length. It had been declared by an ancient oracle that Nineveh could never be taken, unless the river became an enemy to the city. These words buoyed up Sardanapalus, because he looked upon the thing as impossible. But when he saw that the Tigris, by a violent inundation, had thrown down twenty stadia (two miles and a half) of the city wall, and by that means opened a passage to the enemy, he understood the meaning of the oracle, and thought himself lost. He resolved, however, to die in such a manner as, according to his opinion, should cover the infamy of his scandalous and effeminate life. He ordered a pile of wood to be made in his palace, and setting fire to it, burnt himself, his eunuchs, his women, and his treasures.']

Page 555, line 299. *'Eat, drink, and love; the rest 's not worth a fillip.'* 'A monument representing Sardanapalus was found there [at Anchialus], warranted by an inscription in Assyrian characters, of course in the old Assyrian language, which the Greeks, whether well or ill, interpreted thus: "Sardanapalus, son of Anacyndaraxes, in one day founded Anchialus and Tarsus. Eat, drink, play: all other human joys are not worth a fillip." Supposing this version nearly exact (for Arrian says it was not quite so), whether the purpose has not been to invite to civil order a people disposed to turbulence, rather than to recommend immoderate luxury, may perhaps reasonably be questioned.' — MITFORD's *Greece*, ix. 311.

Page 573, line 145. *Bring the mirror.* ['In the third act, when Sardanapalus calls for a *mirror* to look at himself in his *armour*, recollect to quote the Latin passage from *Juvenal* upon *Otho* (a similar character, who did the same thing).' — BYRON, Letter to Murray, May 30, 1821. — The lines in the Second Satire are thus translated by Gifford: —

> 'This grasps a mirror — pathic Otho's boast
> (Auruncan Actor's spoil), where, while his host,
> With shouts, the signal of the fight required,
> He view'd his mailed form; view'd, and admired!
> Lo, a new subject for the historic page,
> A MIRROR, 'midst the arms of civil rage!']

Page 590, line 200. *Some twenty stadia.* About two miles and a half.

Page 595. THE TWO FOSCARI. [A paragraph from W. R. Thayer's *Short History of Venice* will throw some light on the state of affairs and on the particular events which underlie this play: 'We feel that the old Venice is passing away. Instead of the sureness with which she had held aloof from foreign complications, there is now indecision. The old-time statesman was a helmsman, who knew every headland by day and the pilot stars by night. But the new statesmen were jugglers, each trying to keep a dozen balls in the air — so many were the interests and so swift the changes. The spirit of the Renaissance also, that solvent of mediævalism, is working, and at Venice as elsewhere its first effect is to liberate the intellect without strengthening the morals. Political corruption, for which Foscari's election had set an ominous precedent, has grown common. In 1433 a ring, numbering more than fifty patricians, bent on securing offices for themselves and their friends, is discovered and smashed. Ten years later (1444), the Doge's own son, Jacopo, is convicted of taking bribes. The Council of Ten banishes him to Nauplia, but he has already fled to Trieste. In 1447 the Doge implores that his son may be permitted to return, and the Ten consent, adding that the old man cannot properly attend to public affairs so long as his mind is distracted by worry for his son. Jacopo returns, but he falls under suspicion of abetting the assassination of one of the chiefs of the Ten, and although no direct evidence is recorded against him, he is banished to Candia. There he intrigues with the Sultan to free him, is found out, and brought back to Venice for trial. He offers no defence, and the Ten, unwilling to execute the sentence of death which some of the court suggest, condemn him to perpetual banishment. In bidding farewell to his son, the Doge breaks down in agony, and this separation, which proved to be final (Jacopo died in 1457), leaves the aged Foscari a wreck. Enfeebled with years and stricken with grief, he neglects his ducal duties, and the Ten compel him, in spite of his protest, to abdicate. As he quits the Palace, they would screen him from the bitterness of facing the populace; but with unabated pride he replies: "No, no! I will go down by the stair by which I came up to my dogeship." Seven days later he died (November 1, 1457).']

Page 598, line 204. *High-born dame!* [She was Lucrezia Contarini —

> 'A daughter of the house that now among
> Its ancestors in monumental brass
> Numbers eight Doges.' — Rogers.]

Page 602, line 54. '*The Bridge of Sighs.*' [An anachronism; the bridge was not built at this time.]

Page 610, lines 172, 173. *That malady Which calls up green and native fields.* The calenture. [A distemper peculiar to sailors in hot climates.]

Line 177. *That melody, which out of tones and tunes.* [The *Ranz des Vaches*.]

Page 619, line 297. '*There often has been question about you.*' An historical fact.

Page 625. [The Doge drops down and dies. [The death of the elder Foscari took place not at the Palace, but in his own house; not immediately on his descent from the Giants' Stairs, but five days afterwards.]

Page 626, line 368. *That* he *has paid me!* '*L' ha pagata.*' An historical fact. [Here the original MS. ends. The two lines which follow were added by Gifford.]

Page 640, line 293. *Let He.* [Byron apparently had a genius for bad grammar. The curious thing is that Gifford and Murray should have let such solecisms slip through the press.]

Page 653. Enter the Angel of the Lord. ['If *Cain* be "blasphemous," *Paradise Lost* is blasphemous. . . . *Cain* is nothing more than a drama, not a piece of argument. . . . I have even avoided introducing the Deity, as in Scripture (though Milton does, and not very wisely either); but have adopted his Angel as sent to Cain instead, on purpose to avoid shocking any feelings on the subject by falling short of what all uninspired men must fall short in, viz., giving an adequate notion of the effect of the presence of Jehovah.' — Byron, Letter to Murray, February 8, 1822. — A curious specimen of Byron's reverence for sacred things.]

Page 655, line 40. *Albeit thou watchest with 'the seven.'* The archangels, said to be seven in number, and to occupy the eighth rank in the celestial hierarchy.

Page 662, line 541. *The scroll of Enoch.* The book of Enoch, preserved by the Ethiopians, is said by them to be anterior to the flood.

Page 671. Werner. [The *Canterbury Tales*, in five volumes (1797–1805), were by Harriet and Sophia Lee. *The German's Tale* appeared in the fourth volume, by Harriet.]

Page 685, line 124. *The black bands.* [Bands of brigands made up of the remnants of the Swedish army after the evacuation of Bohemia, in 1649.]

Line 139. *Your Wallenstein, your Tilly,* etc. [Commanders of the Imperial and Swedish Armies during the Thirty Years' War.]

Page 691, line 514. *The Ravenstone.* The Ravenstone, 'Rabenstein,' is the *stone gibbet* of Germany, and so called from the ravens perching on it.

Page 699, line 259. *Like Theban brethren.* [For the quarrel of Eteocles and Polynices, see Æschylus's *Seven against Thebes*.]

Page 705, line 46. *Ask that at Magdebourg.* [Soldiers and citizens of Magdeburg were ruthlessly slain by Tilly's men at the siege in 1631.]

Page 708, line 236. *In Prague for peace restored.* [The Treaty of Prague, May 30, 1635.]

Page 722, line 1. Out, *hunchback!* [Byron evidently has in mind the taunts cast at him by his mother for his own deformity.]

Line 23. *The nipple next day sore and udder dry.* [A vulgar error. For a very amusing controversy on the subject, see *Gent. Mag.* vols. lxxx. and lxxxi.]

Page 726, line 267. *The unshorn boy of Peleus.* [Achilles. For the allusion to the river Sperchius (the accent should be on the penult), see *Iliad*, xxiii. 141.]

Page 730, line 526. *And blooming aspect,* Huon. [Compare Sotheby's *Oberon; or, Huon de Bordeaux.*]

Line 573. *Bourbon.* [Charles of Bourbon was cousin to Francis I., and Constable of France. Being bitterly persecuted by the queen-mother for having declined the honor of her hand, and also by the king, he transferred his services to the Emperor Charles V. In 1527 he was at the head of the mixed army of Italians, Spaniards, and Germans which besieged and took Rome. He himself was killed by a shot, as told in the play.]

Page 735, line 55. *Ye who weep o'er Carthage burning.* Scipio, the second Africanus, is said to have repeated a verse of Homer, and wept over the burning of Carthage. He had better have granted it a capitulation.

Page 745. DEDICATION. ['As the Poem is to be published anonymously, *omit* the Dedication. I won't attack the dog in the dark. Such things are for scoundrels and renegadoes like himself.' — BYRON'S *Revise*.]

Page 745, line 16. *I wish he would explain his Explanation.* [Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* appeared in 1817.]

Line 46. *And Wordsworth has his place in the Excise.* Wordsworth's place may be in the Customs — it is, I think, in that or the Excise — besides another at Lord Lonsdale's table, where this poetical charlatan and political parasite licks up the crumbs with a hardened alacrity; the converted Jacobin having long subsided into the clownish sycophant of the worst prejudices of the aristocracy.

Page 746, line 86. *And heartless daughters — worn — and pale — and poor.* 'Pale, but not cadaverous;' — Milton's two elder daughters are said to have robbed him of his books, besides cheating and plaguing him in the economy of his house, etc., etc. His feelings on such an outrage, both as a parent and a scholar, must have been singularly painful. Hayley compares him to Lear. See part third, *Life of Milton*, by W. Hayley (or Hailey, as spelt in the edition before me).

Line 88. *The intellectual eunuch Castlereagh.* Or, —

> Would *he* subside into a hackney Laureate —
> A scribbling, self-sold, soul-hired, scorn'd Iscariot?

I doubt if 'Laureate' and 'Iscariot' be good rhymes, but must say, as Ben Jonson did to Sylvester, who challenged him to rhyme with —

> 'I, John Sylvester,
> Lay with your sister.'

Jonson answered, 'I, Ben Jonson, lay with your wife.' Sylvester answered, 'That is not rhyme.' — 'No,' said Ben Jonson; 'but it is *true*.' [Viscount Castlereagh, Marquis of Londonderry, for a number of years leader of the ultra-tory party, and pursued by Byron with inveterate hatred as being the bitter and unscrupulous opponent of the revolutionary spirit. See Preface to Canto vi.]

Page 747, line 117. *Eutropius of its many masters.* For the character of Eutropius, the eunuch and minister at the court of Arcadius, see Gibbon. [Chap. xxxii.]

Line 132. *'T is that I still retain my 'buff and blue.'* [Mr. Fox and the Whig Club of his time adopted a uniform of blue and buff: hence the coverings of the *Edinburgh Review*, etc.]

Line 136. *Is it not so, my Tory, ultra-Julian.* I allude not to our friend Landor's hero, the traitor Count Julian, but to Gibbon's hero, vulgarly yclept 'The Apostate.'

Line 7. *We all have seen him, in the pantomime.* [Byron alludes to the pantomime called *Don Juan, or The Libertine Destroyed*, adapted from Shadwell's *Libertine*.]

Page 748, line 85. *For her Feinagle's were an useless art.* [Professor Feinagle, of Baden, who, in 1812, under the especial patronage of the '*Blues*,' delivered a course of lectures at the Royal Institution, on Mnemonics.]

Line 89. *Her favourite science was the mathematical.* [Byron said of Lady Byron that she had 'good ideas but could never express them; wrote poetry also, but it was only good by accident. Her letters were always enigmatical, often unintelligible. She was governed by what she called fixed rules and principles squared mathematically.']

Page 749, line 116. *Sir Samuel Romilly.* [This eminent Chancery lawyer lost his lady on the 29th of October, and committed suicide on the 2d of November, 1818. — 'But there will come a day of reckoning, even if I should not live to see it. I have at least seen Romilly shivered, who was one of my assassins. When that man was doing his worst to uproot my whole family, tree, branch, and blossoms — when, after taking my retainer, he went over to them — when he was bringing desolation on my household gods — did he think that, in less than three years, a natural event — a severe, domestic, but an expected and common calamity — would lay his carcass in a cross-road, or stamp his name in a verdict of lunacy!' — BYRON, Letter to Murray, June 7, 1819.]

Line 123. *Mrs. Trimmer's books.* ['My Royal Mistress was all condescension to me. She gave me Mrs. Trimmer's excellent book of the *Economy of Charity*.' — FANNY BURNEY'S *Diary*, October, 1787.]

Line 124. '*Cœlebs' Wife*.' [By Hannah More.]

Page 752, line 333. *Although Longinus tells us there is no hymn.* See Longinus, Section 10, '*ἵνα μὴ ἕν τι περὶ αὐτὴν πάθος φαίνηται, παθῶν δὲ σύνοδος.*' [The first stanza of the hymn is thus translated by Gladstone: —

> 'Him rival to the gods I place,
> Him loftier yet, if loftier be,
> Who, Lesbia, sits before thy face,
> Who listens and who looks on thee.']

Line 351. *They only add them all in an appendix.* Fact! There is, or was, such an edition, with all the obnoxious epigrams of Martial placed by themselves at the end.

Page 753, line 375. *As Saint Augustine in his fine Confessions.* See his *Confessions*, l. i. c. ix. By the representation which St. Augustine gives of himself in his youth, it is easy to see that he was what we should call a rake. He avoided the school as the plague; he loved nothing but gaming and public shows; he robbed his father of everything he could find; he invented a thousand lies to escape the rod, which they were obliged to make use of to punish his irregularities.

Page 755, line 508. *('T was snow that brought St. Anthony to reason.)* For the particulars of St. Anthony's recipe for hot blood in cold weather, see Mr. Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints*.

Line 567. *Armida's fairy art.* [See the episode of Armida and Rinaldo in Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata.*]

Page 757, line 701. *The bard I quote from does not sing amiss.* Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming* — (I think) — the opening of Canto Second — but quote from memory. [iii. 1–4.]

Page 762, line 1030. *Congreve's rockets.* [A kind of explosive shell invented by Sir William Congreve.]

Page 763, line 1089. '*For God's sake, Madam — Madam — here's my master.*' ['To-night, as Countess Guiccioli observed me poring over *Don Juan*, she stumbled by mere chance on the 137th stanza of the First Canto, and asked me what it meant. I told her, "Nothing, — but your husband is coming." As I said this in Italian with some emphasis, she started up in a fright, and said, "Oh, my God, is he coming?" thinking it was her own. You may suppose we laughed when she found out the mistake. You will be amused, as I was; — it happened not three hours ago.' — BYRON, Letter to Murray, November 8, 1819.]

Page 765, line 1177. '*Was it for this that no Cortejo e'er.*' The Spanish 'Cortejo' is much the same as the Italian 'Cavalier Servente.'

Line 1184. *Who took Algiers, declares I used him vilely?* Donna Julia here made a mistake. Count O'Reilly did not take Algiers — but Algiers very nearly took him: he and his army and fleet retreated with great loss, and not much credit, from before that city, in the year 1775.

Page 767, line 1328. *With maudlin Clarence in his Malmsey butt.* [See *Richard III.* I. iv.]

Page 770, line 1512. *Who to Madrid on purpose made a journey.* [Murray's edition of 1903 here gives from the MS. the following seven stanzas as first written by Byron: —

I

'T was a fine cause for those in law delighting —
'T is pity that they had no Brougham in Spain,
Famous for always talking, and ne'er fighting,
For calling names and taking them again;
For blustering, bungling, trimming, wrangling, writing,
Groping all paths to power, and all in vain —
Losing elections, character, and temper,
A foolish, clever fellow — *Idem semper!*

II

Bully in Senates, skulker in the Field,
The Adulterer's advocate when duly feed,
The libeller's gratis Counsel, dirty shield
Which Law affords to many a dirty deed;
A wondrous Warrior against those who yield —
A rod to Weakness, to the brave a reed —
The People's sycophant, the Prince's foe,
And serving him the more by being so.

III

Tory by nurture, Whig by Circumstance,
A Democrat some once or twice a year,
Whene'er it suits his purpose to advance
His vain ambition in its vague career:
A sort of Orator by sufferance,
Less for the comprehension than the ear;
With all the arrogance of endless power,
Without the sense to keep it for an hour.

IV

The House-of-Commons Damocles of words —
Above him, hanging by a single hair,
On each harangue depend some hostile Swords;
And deems he that we *always* will forbear?
Although Defiance oft declined affords
A blotted shield no Shire's true knight would wear:
Thersites of the House, Parolles of Law,
The double Bobadill takes Scorn for Awe.

V

How noble is his language — never pert —
How grand his sentiments which ne'er run riot!
As when he swore 'by God he'd sell his shirt
To head the poll!' I wonder who would buy it;
The skin has passed through such a deal of dirt
In grovelling on to power — such stains now dye it —
So black the long-worn Lion's hide in hue,
You 'd swear his very heart had sweated through.

VI

Panting for power — as harts for cooling streams —
Yet half afraid to venture for the draught;
A go-between, yet blundering in extremes,
And tossed along the vessel fore and aft;
Now shrinking back, now midst the first he seems,
Patriot by force, and courtisan by craft;
Quick without wit, and violent without strength —
A disappointed Lawyer, at full length.

VII

A strange example of the force of Law,
And hasty temper on a kindling mind —
Are these the dreams his young Ambition saw?
Poor fellow! he had better far been blind!
I 'm sorry thus to probe a wound so raw —
But, then, as Bard my duty to Mankind,
For warning to the rest, compels these raps —
As Geographers lay down a Shoal in Maps.]

Page 772, lines 1689, 1690. '*Non ego hoc ferrem calidâ juventâ Consule Planco.*' [I should not have borne this in the heat of youth when Plancus was consul. Horace, *Odes*, III. xiv. 27. It should be *calidus.*]

Page 773, line 1721. *My days of love are over; me no more.*

Me nec femina, nec puer
Jam, nec spes animi credula mutui,
Nec certare juvat mero;
Nec vincire novis tempora floribus.
[HOR. *Odes*, IV. i. 29.]

Page 774, line 1772. '*The world will find thee after many days.*' [Southey, *The Lay of the Laureate, L'Envoy.*]

Page 775, line 56. *Excepting the Venetian Fazzioli.* *Fazzioli* — literally, little handkerchiefs — the veils most availing of St. Mark.

Page 777, line 185. *The ship, call'd the most holy 'Trinidada.'* ['In 1799, while Lord Byron was the pupil of Dr. Glennie, at Dulwich, among the books that lay accessible to the boys was a pamphlet, entitled, *Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Juno on the Coast of Arracan, in the Year 1795.* The pamphlet attracted but little public attention; but, among the young students of Dulwich Grove it was a favourite study; and the impression which it left on the retentive mind of Byron may have had some share, perhaps, in suggesting that curious research through all the various accounts of Shipwrecks upon record, by which he prepared himself to depict, with such power, a scene of the same description in *Don Juan*.' — MOORE.

'With regard to the charges about the Shipwreck, I think that I told you and Mr. Hobhouse, years ago, that there was not a circumstance of it not taken from fact; not, indeed, from any single shipwreck, but all from actual facts of different wrecks.' — BYRON, Letter to Murray, August 23, 1821.]

Page 784, line 658. *Remember Ugolino condescends.*

> Quandò ebbe detto ciò, con gli occhi torti
> Riprese il teschio misero co' denti,
> Che furo all' osso, come d' un can forti.

[Thus translated by Wright: —

> 'This said — aside his vengeful eyes were thrown,
> And with his teeth against the skull he tore,
> Fierce as a dog to gnaw the very bone.'
> *Inferno*, xxx. 60.]

Page 791, line 1096. *My grand-dad's 'Narrative.'* [The account of a journey around the world written by Byron's grandfather and entitled *A Narrative of the Honourable John Byron*.]

Page 799, line 1608. *Some play the devil, and then write a novel.* [Alluding to Lady Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon*, in which she pilloried Byron for his alleged desertion of her.]

Page 800, line 1656. *So said the royal sage Sardanapalus.* [Compare Byron's *Sardanapalus*, act I., scene ii. — Athenæus (viii. 14, Yonge's translation) quotes the epitaph thus: —

> 'Knowing that you are mortal, feed your soul
> On banquets and delights; for in the grave
> There 's no enjoyment left. I now am dust
> Who once was king of mighty Nineveh;
> The things which I did eat, the joys of love,
> The insolent thoughts with which my wealth did fill me,
> Are all I now have left; for all the power
> And all the happiness is gone forever.
> This is the only prudent rule of life,
> I never shall forget it, let who will
> Hoard boundless treasures of uncounted gold.']

Page 802, line 75. *Dante and Milton.* Dante calls his wife, in the *Inferno*, 'la fiera moglie.' — Milton's first wife ran away from him within the first month. If she had not, what would John Milton have done?

Page 803, line 88. *Meant to personify the mathematics.* [The mathematical disposition of his wife seems to have haunted Byron like the memory of a nightmare. Why?]

Page 807, line 360. '*For none likes more to hear himself converse.*'

> Rispone allor' Margutte, a dir tel tosto,
> Io non credo piu al nero ch' all' azzurro;
> Ma nel cappone, o lesso, o vuogli arrosto,
> E credo alcuna volto anco nel burro;
> Nella cervigia, e quando io n' ho nel mosto,
> E molto piu nel' espro che il mangurro;
> Ma sopra tutto nel buon vino ho fede,
> E credo che sia salvo chi gli crede.
> PULCI, *Morgante Maggiore*, xviii. 151.

Page 809, line 505. *The hangings of the room were tapestry.* ['Almost all *Don Juan* is real life, either my own, or from people I knew. By the way, much of the description of the *furniture*, in Canto 3d, is taken from *Tully's Tripoli* (*Narrative of a Ten Years' Residence in Tripoli in Africa*).' — BYRON, Letter to Murray, August 23, 1821.]

Page 810, line 568. *That e'er by precious metal was held in.* This dress is Moorish, and the bracelets and bar are worn in the manner described. The reader will perceive hereafter, that as the mother of Haidée was of Fez, her daughter wore the garb of the country.

Line 570. *A like gold bar above her instep roll'd.* The bar of gold above the instep is a mark of sovereign rank in the women of the families of the deys, and is worn as such by their female relatives.

Line 580. *Her person if allow'd at large to run.* This is no exaggeration: they were four women whom I remember to have seen, who possessed their hair in this profusion; of these, three were English, the other was a Levantine. Their hair was of that length and quantity, that, when let down, it almost entirely shaded the person, so as nearly to render dress a superfluity. Of these, only one had dark hair; the Oriental's had, perhaps, the lightest colour of the four.

Page 812, line 695. *The Scian and the Teian muse.* [Homer, 'the blind old bard of Scio's rocky isle;' and Anacreon of Teos.]

Line 700. *Than your sires' 'Islands of the Blest.'* The νῆσοι μακάρων of the Greek poets were supposed to have been the Cape de Verd Islands or the Canaries.

Page 814, line 840. *Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath).* [Coleridge married Sarah Fricker, Southey married her sister Edith.]

Line 852. *Joanna Southcote's Shiloh, and her sect.* [The followers of this fanatic are said to have amounted, at one time, to a hundred thousand. She announced herself as the mother of a second Shiloh, whose speedy advent she confidently predicted. A cradle of expensive materials was prepared for the expected prodigy. Dr. Reece and another medical man attested her dropsy; and many were her dupes down to the moment of her death, in 1814.]

Line 880. *And drivels seas to set it well afloat.*

> 'There 's something in a flying horse,
> There 's something in a huge balloon;
> But through the clouds I 'll never float
> Until I have a little boat,' etc. —
> WORDSWORTH, *Peter Bell*.

Page 815, line 896. *Can sneer at him who drew 'Achitophel!'* 'The verses of Dryden, once so highly celebrated, are forgotten.' — Mr. W. WORDSWORTH'S *Preface* [1815].

Line 935. *And Dryden's lay made haunted ground.* [Alluding to Dryden's *Theodore and Honoria*, which is based on Boccaccio.]

Line 945. *Oh, Hesperus! thou bringest all good things.* [Compare the fragment of Sappho, ϝέσπερε, πάντα φέρων, κ. τ. λ.]

Page 816, line 960. *Ah! surely nothing dies but something mourns.*

> Era gia l' ora che volge disio,
> A' naviganti, e 'ntenerisce il cuore;

Lo di ch' han detto a' dolci amici a dio ·
E che lo nuovo peregrin' d' amore
Punge, se ode Squilla di lontano,
Che paia 'l giorno pianger che si muore.
Dante, *Purgatory*, canto viii.

This last line is the first of Gray's *Elegy*, taken by him without acknowledgment.

Line 965. *Some hands unseen strew'd flowers upon his tomb.* See Suetonius for this fact.

Page 817, line 89. '*Whom the gods love die young,' was said of yore.* See Herodotus. [The quotation is from Menander. Byron no doubt has in mind the famous story of Cleobis and Biton, Herodotus, i. 31.]

Page 823, line 465. *A vein had burst, and her sweet lips' pure dyes.* This is no very uncommon effect of the violence of conflicting and different passions.

Page 826, line 604. (*Bryant says the contrary.*) [*Dissertation concerning the War of Troy*, by Jacob Bryant.]

Line 640. *But sold by the impresario at no high rate.* This is a fact. A few years ago a man engaged a company for some foreign theatre, embarked them at an Italian port, and carrying them to Algiers, sold them all. One of the women, returned from her captivity, I heard sing, by a strange coincidence, in Rossini's opera of *L'Italiana in Algieri*, in Venice, in the beginning of 1817.

Page 827, line 687. *From all the Pope makes yearly 't would perplex.* It is strange that it should be the Pope and the Sultan, who are the chief encouragers of this branch of trade — women being prohibited as singers at St. Peter's, and not deemed trust-worthy as guardians of the harem.

Page 829, line 824. *While weeds and ordure rankle round the base.* The pillar which records the battle of Ravenna is about two miles from the city, on the opposite side of the river to the road towards Forli. Gaston de Foix, who gained the battle, was killed in it: there fell on both sides twenty thousand men. The present state of the pillar and its site is described in the text.

Page 830, line 868. *Like Yorick's starling.* [Alluding to the well-known story in Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*.]

Page 831, line 18. *The ocean stream.* 'Ωκεανοῖο ῥέοιο. This expression of Homer has been much criticised. It hardly answers to our Atlantic ideas of the ocean, but is sufficiently applicable to the Hellespont and the Bosphorus, with the Ægean intersected with islands.

Line 35. *'T is a grand sight from off* '*the Giant's Grave.*' The 'Giant's Grave' is a height on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus, much frequented by holiday parties; like Harrow and Highgate.

Page 835, line 247. *Of food I think with Philip's son, or rather.* See Plutarch in *Alex.*, Q. Curt. *Hist. Alexand.*, and Sir Richard Clayton's *Critical Inquiry into the Life of Alexander the Great.*

Line 262. *And, running out as fast as I was able.* The assassination alluded to took place on the 8th of December, 1820, in the streets of Ravenna, not a hundred paces from the residence of the writer. The circumstances were as described. [See Byron's Letter to Moore, December 9, 1820.]

Page 836, line 318. *The caïque.* The light and elegant wherries plying about the quays of Constantinople are so called.

Page 837, line 348. *From Saint Bartholomew we have saved our skin.* [St. Bartholomew is said to have been flayed alive.]

Page 838, line 424. *Prepared for supper with a glass of rum.* In Turkey nothing is more common than for the Mussulmans to take several glasses of strong spirits by way of appetizer. I have seen them take as many as six of raki before dinner, and swear that they dined the better for it: I tried the experiment, but fared like the Scotchman, who having heard that the birds called kittiwakes were admirable whets, ate six of them, and complained that 'he was no hungrier than when he began.'

Line 435. *Splendid but silent, save in one, where, dropping.* A common furniture. I recollect being received by Ali Pacha in a large room, paved with marble, containing a marble basin, and a fountain playing in the centre, etc., etc.

Line 440. *As wondering what the devil a noise that is.* [An 'a' has been inserted in the present text before 'noise.' The scansion shows that the common text has some such omission.]

Page 839, line 480. *And the calumniated queen Semiramis.* Babylon was enlarged by Nimrod, strengthened and beautified by Nabuchadonosor, and rebuilt by Semiramis.

Line 503. *And* '*Et sepulchri immemor struis domos.*'

['But you, with thoughtless pride elate,
Unconscious of impending fate,
Command the pillar'd dome to rise,
When, lo! the tomb forgotten lies.'
Horace, *Od.* II. xviii., translated by Francis.]

Page 842, line 695. *The gate so splendid was in all its* features. *Features* of a gate — a ministerial metaphor: 'the *feature* upon which this question *hinges*.' See the *Fudge Family* [by Moore], or hear Castlereagh.

Page 843, line 736. '*A good deal practised here upon occasion.*' A few years ago the wife of Muchtar Pacha complained to his father of his son's supposed infidelity: he asked with whom, and she had the barbarity to give in a list of the twelve handsomest women in Yanina. They were seized, fastened up in sacks, and drowned in the lake the same night. One of the guards who was present informed me, that not one of the victims uttered a cry, or showed a symptom of terror at so sudden a 'wrench from all we know, from all we love.'

Page 844, line 842. *Though on more* thorough-bred *or fairer fingers.* There is nothing, perhaps, more distinctive of birth than the hand. It is almost the only sign of blood which aristocracy can generate.

Page 850, line 1176. *Save Solyman, the glory of their line.* It may not be unworthy of remark, that Bacon, in his essay on *Empire*, hints that Solyman was the last of his line; on what authority, I know not. These are his words: 'The destruction of Mustaphor was so fatal to Solyman's line, as the succession of the Turks from Solyman, until this day, is suspected to be untrue, and of strange blood; for that Selymus the second was thought to be supposititious.' But Bacon, in his historical authorities, is often inaccurate. I could give half a dozen instances from his Apothegms only.

Page 852, line 2. '*Which,—taken at the flood,' —you know the rest.* [See *Julius Cæsar*, IV. iii.]

Page 853, line 56. *Who lent his lady to his friend Hortensius.* Cato gave up his wife Martia to his friend Hortensius; but, on the death of the latter, took her back again. This conduct was ridiculed by the Romans, who observed, that Martia entered the house of Hortensius very poor, but returned to the bed of Cato loaded with treasures. — PLUTARCH.

Page 854, line 96. *A 'Bed of Ware.'* [See *Twelfth Night*, III. ii.]

Line 100. *To those sad hungry jacobins the worms.* 'Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else, to fat us; and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king, and your lean beggar, is but variable service; two dishes but to one table: that 's the end.' — *Hamlet.*

Line 104. (*A 'Highland welcome' all the wide world over.*) See *Waverley* [chap. xx.].

Line 134. *In his monastic concubine of snow.* 'The blessed Francis, being strongly solicited one day by the emotions of the flesh, pulled off his clothes and scourged himself soundly: being after this inflamed with a wonderful fervour of mind, he plunged his naked body into a great heap of snow. The devil, being overcome, retired immediately, and the holy man returned victorious into his cell.' — See Butler's *Lives of the Saints.*

Line 136. '*Medio tu tutissimus ibis.*' [The doctrine is sufficiently Horatian, but the words, minus the 'tu,' are in Ovid, *Met.* ii. 137.]

Page 855, line 210. *The tyrant's wish, 'that mankind only had.'* Caligula — see Suetonius. 'Being in a rage at the people, for favouring a party in the Circensian games in opposition to him, he cried out, "I wish the Roman people had but one neck."'

Page 856, line 225. *The lovely Odalisques.* The ladies of the seraglio.

Page 857, line 312. *They would prefer to Padisha or Pacha.* Padisha is the Turkish title of the Grand Signior.

Page 861, line 595. *A 'wood obscure,' like that where Dante found.*

> Nell, mezzo del' cammin' di nostra vita
> Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura, etc. —*Inferno.*

Page 868, line 65. *The fortress is call'd Ismail, and is placed.* [Byron's account of the capture of Ismail, in 1790, follows pretty closely the *Histoire de la Nouvelle Russie.*]

Line 96. *Forty feet high, upon a cavalier.* [*Casemate:* A vault of stone or brickwork, usually built in the thickness of the rampart of a fortress, and pierced in front with embrasures, through which artillery may be fired. — *Century Dict.* *Barbette:* The platform or breastwork of a fortification, from which cannon may be fired over the parapet instead of through embrasures. — *Ibid.* *Cavalier:* A raised work commonly situated within the bastion. — *Ibid.*]

Page 871, line 243. *Their Delhis mann'd some boats, and sail'd again.* ['Properly madmen: a species of troops who, in the Turkish army, act as the forlorn hope.' — D'HERBELOT.]

Page 873, line 408. *Was teaching his recruits to use the bayonet.* Fact: Suwaroff did this in person.

Page 879, line 64. *All sounds it pierceth 'Allah! Allah! Hu!'* Allah Hu! is properly the war cry of the Mussulmans, and they dwell on the last syllable, which gives it a wild and peculiar effect.

Line 70. *'Carnage' (so Wordsworth tells you) 'is God's daughter.'*

> 'But *Thy* [1] most dreaded instrument
> In working out a pure intent,
> Is man array'd for mutual slaughter;
> Yea, *Carnage is thy daughter!*'
> WORDSWORTH'S *Thanksgiving Ode.* [Lines afterward omitted by Wordsworth.]

Page 880, line 144. *Was printed* Grove, *although his name was Grose.* A fact: see the Waterloo Gazettes. I recollect remarking at the time to a friend: '*There* is *fame!* a man is killed, his name is Grose, and they print it Grove.' I was at college with the deceased, who was a very amiable and clever man, and his society in great request for his wit, gaiety, and 'Chansons à boire.'

Page 881, line 179. (*The antiquarians who can settle time.*) See General Valancey and Sir Lawrence Parsons.

Line 200. *'Tis pity 'that such meaning should pave hell.'* The Portuguese proverb says that 'hell is paved with good intentions.'

Page 882, line 264. *By thy humane discovery, Friar Bacon.* Gunpowder is said to have been discovered by this friar.

Page 890, line 776. *That you and I will win St. George's collar.* A Russian military order.

Page 895, line 1064. '*Ismail's ours.*' In the original Russian —

> 'Slava bogu! slava vam!
> Krepost Vzala y ïä tam;'

a kind of couplet; for he was a poet.

Page 896, line 1. *Oh, Wellington! (or 'Villainton'—for Fame.)*

> [M. de Villainton a tout pris,
> Point d'argent dans la ville de Paris, etc.
> DE BERANGER.]

Line 8. *Humanity would rise, and thunder 'Nay!'* Query — *Ney?* — PRINTER'S DEVIL.

Page 897, line 40. *And 'Europe's Liberator'*

---

[1] To wit, the Deity's: this is perhaps as pretty a pedigree for murder as ever was found out by Garter King at Arms. — What would have been said, had any free-spoken people discovered such a lineage?

— *still enslaved.* *Vide* Speeches in Parliament, after the battle of Waterloo.

Line 44. *A slice or two from your luxurious meals.* 'I at this time got a post, being for fatigue, with four others. — We were sent to break biscuit, and make a mess for Lord Wellington's hounds. I was very hungry, and thought it a good job at the time, as we got our own fill while we broke the biscuit, — a thing I had not got for some days. When thus engaged, the Prodigal Son was never once out of my mind; and I sighed, as I fed the dogs, over my humbled situation and my ruined hopes.' — *Journal of a Soldier of the 71st Regt. during the war in Spain.*

Page 898, line 145. '*But heaven,*' *as Cassio says,* '*is above all.*' See *Othello* [II. iii. Loosely quoted as usual].

Page 899, line 210. *I've heard them in the Ephesian ruins howl.* In Greece I never saw or heard these animals; but among the ruins of Ephesus I have heard them by hundreds.

Page 900, line 264. *Because he could no more digest his dinner.* He was killed in a conspiracy, after his temper had been exasperated by his extreme costivity to a degree of insanity.

Page 902, line 376. *And had just buried the fair-faced Lanskoi.* He was the grande passion of the grand Catherine. See her Lives under the head of 'Lanskoi.'

Line 387. *Bid Ireland's Londonderry's Marquess show.* This was written long before the suicide of that person.

Page 903, line 433. *Oh thou* '*teterrima causa*' *of all* '*belli.*' [Hor. *Sat.* I. iii.]

Page 904, line 503. '*A man*' (*as Giles says*); *for though she would widow all.* ['His fortune swells him, it is rank, he 's married.' — *Sir Giles Overreach;* MASSINGER'S *New Way to pay old Debts.*]

Page 906, line 632. *Of several ribands, and some thousand peasants.* A Russian estate is always valued by the number of the slaves upon it.

Page 909, line 99. *The* '*reformadoes.*' 'Reformers,' or rather 'Reformed.' The Baron Bradwardine in *Waverley* is authority for the word.

Line 115. *The endless soot bestows a tint far deeper.* Query, *suit?* — PRINTER'S DEVIL.

Line 139. *The Dee, the Don, Balgounie's brig's* black wall. The brig of Don, near the 'auld toun' of Aberdeen, with its one arch, and its black deep salmon stream below, is in my memory as yesterday. I still remember, though perhaps I may misquote, the awful proverb which made me pause to cross it, and yet lean over it with a childish delight, being an only son, at least by the mother's side. The saying as recollected by me was this, but I have never heard or seen it since I was nine years of age: —

> 'Brig of Balgounie *black* 's your *wa'*,
> Wi' a wife's *ae son*, and a mear's *ae foal*,
> Doun ye shall fa'!'

Page 910, line 195. *With his* Agrarian *laws the high estate.* Tiberius Gracchus, being tribune of the people, demanded in their name the execution of the Agrarian law; by which all persons possessing above a certain number of acres were to be deprived of the surplus for the benefit of the poor citizens.

Page 911, line 265. *Oh for a* forty-parson power *to chant.* A metaphor taken from the 'forty-horse power' of a steam-engine. That mad wag, the Reverend Sydney Smith, sitting by a brother clergyman at dinner, observed afterwards that his dull neighbour had a '*twelve-parson power*' of conversation.

Page 912, line 286. *To strip the Saxons of their* hydes, *like tanners.* I believe a hyde of land to be a legitimate word, and, as such, subject to the tax of a quibble.

Page 913, line 391. *When, a new Iphigene, she went to Tauris.* The empress went to the Crimea, accompanied by the Emperor Joseph, in the year — I forget which. [1787.]

Page 914, line 460. *Which gave her dukes the graceless name of* '*Biron.*' In the Empress Anne's time, Biren, her favourite, assumed the name and arms of the 'Birons' of France, which families are yet extant with that of England. There are still the daughters of Courland of that name; one of them I remember seeing in England in the blessed year of the Allies (1814) — the Duchess of S. — to whom the English Duchess of Somerset presented me as a namesake.

Page 915, line 495. *Eleven thousand maidenheads of bone.* St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins were still extant in 1816, and may be so yet, as much as ever.

Page 918, line 670. *A male Mrs. Fry.* [Elizabeth Fry, the Quaker lady, whose benevolent exertions effected so great a change in the condition of the female prisoners in Newgate.]

Page 920, line 109. *Juan, who saw the moon's late minion bleed.* ['*Falstaff.* Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon: and let men say, we be men of good government; being governed as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we — steal.' — *IV. Henry,* I. ii.]

Line 123. *Oh! for a glass of* max! [Gin or Hollands.]

Line 133. *A kiddy upon town.* ['A thief of the lower order, who, when he is breeched by a course of successful depredation, dresses in the extreme of vulgar gentility, and affects a knowingness in his air and conversation, which renders him in reality an object of ridicule.' — VAUX, *Vocabulary of the Flash Languages.*]

Page 921, line 152. *So prime, so swell, so nutty, and so knowing.* ['*Ken,* a house that harbours thieves. — *Spellken,* the play-house. — *Queer a flat,* to puzzle or confound a gull, a silly fellow. — *Toby-spice,* etc., robbery on horseback. — *Lark,* fun or sport of any kind. — *Blowing,* a pick-pocket's trull. — *Swell,* gentlemanly. — *Nutty:* to be nuts upon, is, to be very much pleased or gratified with, anything; thus, a person who conceives a strong inclination for another of the opposite sex is said to be quite *nutty* upon him or her.' — VAUX.] The advance of science and of language has rendered it unnecessary to translate the above good and true English, spoken in its original purity by the select mobility and their patrons. The following is a stanza of a song which was very popular, at least in my early days: —

> ‘ On the high toby-spice flash the muzzle,
> In spite of each gallows old scout;
> If you at the spellken can't hustle,
> You 'll be hobbled in making a Clout.
>
> ‘ Then your Blowing will wax gallows haughty,
> When she hears of your scaly mistake,
> She 'll surely turn snitch for the forty —
> That her Jack may be regular weight.’

If there be any gemman so ignorant as to require a traduction, I refer him to my old friend and corporeal pastor and master, John Jackson, Esq., Professor of Pugilism; who, I trust, still retains the strength and symmetry of his model of a form, together with his good humour, and athletic as well as mental accomplishments.

Page 922, line 232. *St. James's Palace and St. James's ‘Hells.’* ‘Hells,’ gaming-houses. What their number may now be in this life, I know not. Before I was of age I knew them pretty accurately, both ‘gold’ and ‘silver.’ I was once nearly called out by an acquaintance, because when he asked me where I thought that his soul would be found hereafter, I answered, ‘In Silver Hell.’

Page 923, line 340. *Anent.* ‘Anent’ was a Scotch phrase meaning ‘concerning’ — ‘with regard to:’ it has been made English by the Scotch novels; and, as the Frenchman said, ‘If it *be not, ought to be* English.’

Page 924, line 385. *The milliners who furnish ‘drapery Misses.’* This term is probably any thing now but a *mystery*. It was, however, almost so to me when I first returned from the East in 1811–1812. It means a pretty, a high-born, a fashionable young female, well instructed by her friends, and furnished by her milliner with a wardrobe upon credit, to be repaid, when married, by the *husband*. The riddle was first read to me by a young and pretty heiress, on my praising the ‘drapery’ of the ‘*untochered*’ but ‘pretty virginities’ (like Mrs. Anne Page) of the *then* day, which has now been some years yesterday: she assured me that the thing was common in London; and as her own thousands, and blooming looks, and rich simplicity of array, put any suspicion in her own case out of the question, I confess I gave come credit to the allegation. If necessary, authorities might be cited; in which case I could quote both ‘drapery’ and the wearers. Let us hope, however, that it is now obsolete.

Page 925, line 454. *The very Reverend Rowley Powley.* [George Croly, preacher and tragedian.]

Line 456. *A modern Ancient Pistol — by the hilts.* [The following stanza was afterwards added: —

> Still he excells that artificial hard
> Labourer in the same vineyard, though the vine
> Yields him but vinegar for his reward. —
> That neutralized dull Dorus of the Nine;
> That swarthy Sporus, neither man nor bard;
> That ox of verse, who *ploughs* for every line: —
> Cambyses' roaring Romans beat at least
> The howling Hebrews of Cybele's priest.

The allusion is to H. H. Milman.]

Line 458. *Sets up for being a sort of* moral me. [Some reviewer had bestowed the title of ‘a Moral Byron’ on Mr. Bryan Procter, author of *Dramatic Sketches*, etc., etc., all published under the name of ‘Barry Cornwall.’]

Line 471. *'T is strange the mind, that very fiery particle.*

> Divinæ particulam auræ.
> [HORACE, *Sat.* II. ii. 79.]

Page 926, line 508. *And Centaur Nessus garb of mortal clothing.*

> Illita Nesseo misi tibi texta veneno.
> [OVID, *Epist.* ix. 163.

I have sent thee a robe infected with the venom of Nessus.]

Page 927, line 564. *A sort of sentimental bogle.* Scotch for goblin.

Page 928, line 612. *And where is ‘Fum’ the Fourth, our ‘royal bird?’* [See Moore's *Fum and Hum, the Two Birds of Royalty*, appended to his *Fudge Family*.]

Page 929, line 662. *I have seen a Congress doing all that 's mean.* [The Congress at Verona, in 1822.]

Line 673. *But ‘carpe diem,’ Juan, ‘carpe, carpe!’* [‘Carpe diem, quàm minimum credula postero.’ — HORACE, *Od.* I. xi. 8. — Snatch the day, and trust not in the morrow.]

Page 930, line 35. *The shirtless patriots of Spain.* The Descamisados.

Line 41. *Liberal Lafitte.* [Jacques Lafitte, Governor of the Bank of France.]

Page 932, line 151. *And Mitford in the nineteenth century.* See Mitford's *Greece*. ‘Græcia *Verax*.’ His great pleasure consists in praising tyrants, abusing Plutarch, spelling oddly, and writing quaintly; and what is strange, after all, *his* is the best modern history of Greece in any language, and he is perhaps the best of all modern historians whatsoever. Having named his sins, it is but fair to state his virtues — learning, labour, research, wrath, and partiality. I call the latter virtues in a writer, because they make him write in earnest.

Page 934, line 293. *A hazy widower turn'd of forty 's sure.* This line may puzzle the commentators more than the present generation.

Page 938, line 558. ‘*Bos piger.*’ [Lazy ox. Horace, *Epist.* I. xiv. 43.]

Page 939, line 581. *Like Russians rushing from hot baths to snows.* The Russians, as is well known, run out from their hot baths to plunge into the Neva; a pleasant practical antithesis, which it seems does them no harm.

Page 940, line 654. *Which flash'd as far as where the musk-bull browses.* For a description and print of this inhabitant of the polar region and native country of the Auroræ Boreales, see Parry's *Voyage in search of a North-west Passage.*

Line 666. *A Prince.* [The Prince Regent, afterwards George IV.]

Line 688. *As Philip's son proposed to do with Athos.* A sculptor projected to hew Mount Athos into a statue of Alexander, with a city in one hand, and, I believe, a river in his pocket, with various other similar devices. But Alexander 's gone, and Athos remains, I trust ere long to look over a nation of freemen.

Page 942, line 50. *Right honestly, 'he liked an honest hater!'* [Alluding to the well-known saying of Dr. Johnson's.]

Line 98. *To venture a solution: 'Davus sum!'* ['Davus sum, non Œdipus:' I 'm an ignorant slave, not Œdipus. — TERENCE, *Andria*, I. ii.]

Page 943, line 138. '*But* do you more, *Sempronius* — don't *deserve it.*'

['’T is not in mortals to command success;
But we 'll do more, Sempronius — we 'll deserve it.'
ADDISON, *Cato*.]

Page 944, line 201. *Also there bin another pious reason.*

'With every thing that pretty *bin*,
My lady, sweet, arise.'
SHAKSPEARE [*Cymbeline*, II. iii.]

Line 209. *I might have chosen Piccadilly.* [Byron himself lived here during the years 1815 and 1816.]

Page 946, line 353. '*Arcadians both.*' 'Arcades ambo.' [Virgil, *Ecl.* vii. 4.]

Page 947, line 373. 'Cosi viaggino i Ricchi!' ['Thus the rich travel.']

Page 948, line 433. *To Norman Abbey.* [Here follows a description of Newstead Abbey.]

Page 950, line 564. *Or wilder group of savage Salvatore's.* Salvator Rosa. The wicked necessity of rhyming obliges me to adapt the name to the verse.

Line 575. *Makes me feel quite Danish.* If I err not, 'your Dane' is one of Iago's catalogue of nations 'exquisite in their drinking.'

Page 951, line 621. *The plains of Dura.* In Assyria.

Line 655. *The very* Siria *of the spheres.* Siria, i. e. bitch-star.

Page 952, line 730. *Longbow from Ireland, Strongbow from the Tweed.* [Curran and Erskine.]

Page 953, line 768. '*That Scriptures out of church are blasphemies.*' 'Mrs. Adams answered Mr. Adams, that it was blasphemous to talk of Scripture out of church.' This dogma was broached to her husband — the best Christian in any book. — See *Joseph Andrews.*

Page 954, line 848. *Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.* It would have taught him humanity at least. This sentimental savage, whom it is a mode to quote (amongst the novelists) to show their sympathy for innocent sports and old songs, teaches how to sew up frogs, and break their legs by way of experiment, in addition to the art of angling, — the cruelest, the coldest, and the stupidest of pretended sports. They may talk about the beauties of nature, but the angler merely thinks of his dish of fish; he has no leisure to take his eyes from off the streams, and a single *bite* is worth to him more than all the scenery around. Besides, some fish bite best on a rainy day. The whale, the shark, and the tunny fishery have somewhat of noble and perilous in them; even net fishing, trawling, etc. are more humane and useful. But angling! — No angler can be a good man. — 'One of the best men I ever knew, — as humane, delicate-minded, generous, and excellent a creature as any in the world, — was an angler: true, he angled with painted flies, and would have been incapable of the extravagancies of I. Walton.' The above addition was made by a friend in reading over the MS. — 'Audi alteram partem.' — I leave it to counterbalance my own observation.

Page 958, line 167. 'Vetabo Cereris sacrum qui vulgarit.' [Horace, *Od.* III. ii. 26. Byron quotes from memory and not with perfect accuracy. Gladstone thus translates: —

'One, Ceres, blabs thy sacred rite:
No common roof for him with me,
No common bark to tempt the sea.']

Page 959, line 259. *And never* craned. *Craning.* — 'To *crane*' is, or was, an expression used to denote a gentleman's stretching out his neck over a hedge, 'to look before he leaped;' — a pause in his 'vaulting ambition,' which in the field doth occasion some delay and execration in those who may be immediately behind the equestrian sceptic. 'Sir, if you don't choose to take the leap, let me!' — was a phrase which generally sent the aspirant on again; and to good purpose: for though 'the horse and rider' might fall, they make a gap through which, and over him and his steed, the field might follow.

Line 280. *Ask'd next day, 'If men ever hunted twice?'* See his Letters to his Son.

Page 961, line 384. *Go to the coffee-house, and take another.* In Swift's or Horace Walpole's letters I think it is mentioned that somebody, regretting the loss of a friend, was answered by an universal Pylades: 'When I lose one, I go to the Saint James's Coffee-house, and take another.' I recollect having heard an anecdote of the same kind. — Sir W. D. was a great gamester. Coming in one day to the club of which he was a member, he was observed to look melancholy. 'What is the matter, Sir William?' cried Hare, of facetious memory. 'Ah!' replied Sir W., 'I have just *lost* poor Lady D.' — '*Lost!* What at? *Quinze* or *Hazard?*' was the consolatory rejoinder of the querist.

Page 963, line 472. *And I refer you to wise Oxenstiern.* The famous Chancellor Oxenstiern [1583–1654] said to his son, on the latter expressing his surprise upon the great effects arising from petty causes in the presumed mystery of politics: 'You see by this, my son, with how little wisdom the kingdoms of the world are governed.' [The true story is; — young Oxenstiern, on being told he was to proceed on some diplomatic mission, expressed his doubts of his own fitness for such an office. The old Chancellor, laughing, answered, — 'Nescis, mi fili, quantulâ scientiâ gubernatur mundus.']

Page 965, line 600. *Or Swiss Rousseau, cry*

'Voilà la Pervenche!' See *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

Line 609. 'Beatus ille procul!' *from* 'negotiis.' Horace, *Epod.* ii. 1. ['Noscitur à sociis' is not in Horace.]

Line 657. *Shut up the bald-coot bully Alexander!* [The bald-coot is a small bird of prey in marshes. The Emperor Alexander was baldish.]

Page 969, line 64. '*A draft on Ransom.*' [Ransom, Kinnaird, and Co. were Lord Byron's bankers.]

Page 970, line 138. *Great Socrates? And thou, Diviner still.* As it is necessary in these times to avoid ambiguity, I say that I mean, by 'Diviner still,' Christ. If ever God was man — or man God — he was *both*. I never arraigned his creed, but the use — or abuse — made of it. Mr. Canning one day quoted Christianity to sanction negro slavery, and Mr. Wilberforce had little to say in reply. And was Christ crucified, that black men might be scourged? If so, he had better been born a Mulatto, to give both colours an equal chance of freedom, or at least salvation.

Line 161. '*Omnia vult* belle *Matho dicere — dic aliquando.*' [Martial, x. 46. — *Vult* should be *vis*; Byron as usual quotes loosely. — Elphinstone thus translates: —

> 'Thou finely wouldst say all? Say something well:
> Say something ill, if thou wouldst bear the bell.']

Page 972, line 273. *When Rapp the Harmonist embargo'd marriage.* This extraordinary and flourishing German colony in America does not entirely exclude matrimony, as the 'Shakers' do; but lays such restrictions upon it as prevents more than a certain quantum of births within a certain number of years; which births (as Mr. Hulme observes) generally arrive 'in a little flock like those of a farmer's lambs, all within the same month perhaps.' These Harmonists (so called from the name of their settlement) are represented as a remarkably flourishing, pious, and quiet people. See the various recent writers on America.

Page 974, line 386. *Of Brutus at the pageant of Tiberius.* See Tacitus, b. vi. [From this passage is derived the common saying, conspicuous by his absence.]

Page 976, line 515. *Wines too, which might again have slain young Ammon.* [Referring to the death of Alexander, reputed to be the son of Zeus Ammon.]

Line 527. *While great Lucullus' Robe triumphal muffles.* A dish 'à la Lucullus.' This hero, who conquered the East, has left his more extended celebrity to the transplantation of cherries (which he first brought into Europe), and the nomenclature of some very good dishes; — and I am not sure that (barring indigestion) he has not done more service to mankind by his cookery than by his conquests. A cherry-tree may weigh against a bloody laurel; besides, he has contrived to earn celebrity from both.

Line 544. *There 's pretty picking in those* '*petits puits.*' 'Petits puits d'amour garnis des confitures,' — a classical and well-known dish for part of the flank of a second course.

Page 979, line 732. *As Eldon on a lunatic commission.* [John Scott, Earl of Eldon, Chancellor of England (with the intermission of fourteen months) from 1801 to 1830.]

Page 980, line 768. *The philosopher of Malmsbury.* Hobbes: who, doubting of his own soul, paid that compliment to the souls of other people as to decline their visits, of which he had some apprehension.

Line 2. *To draw the bow, to ride, and speak the truth.* [Xenophon gives an elaborate account of the education of the Persian youth, but the particular fact to which Byron here refers is from Herodotus, i. 136.]

Line 10. '*For this effect defective comes by cause.*' *Hamlet*, Act II. sc. ii.

Page 981, line 40. *Quiets at once with* 'quia *impossible.*' [The phrase is from Tertullian's *De Carne Christi.*]

Line 49. *I merely mean to say what Johnson said.* ['That the dead are seen no more,' said Imlac, 'I will not undertake to maintain, against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages, and of all nations. There is no people, rude or unlearned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth; those that never heard of one another would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers, can very little weaken the general evidence; and some, who deny it with their tongues, confess it with their fears.' — *Rasselas*, chap. xxx.]

Line 85. *Titus exclaim'd, 'I 've lost a day!'* ['Remembering once at dinner that during the whole day he had granted a favour to no one, he uttered the memorable and deservedly praised words: "Friends, I have lost a day."' — Suetonius, *Titus*, viii.]

Page 985, line 281. '*Oh! have you never heard of the Black Friar?*' ['During a visit to Newstead, in 1814, Lord Byron actually fancied he saw the ghost of the Black Friar, which was supposed to have haunted the Abbey from the time of the dissolution of the monasteries.' — Moore.]

Page 986, line 391. *For a spoil'd carpet.* I think it *was* a *carpet* on which Diogenes trod, with — 'Thus I trample on the pride of Plato!' — 'With greater pride,' as the other replied. But as *carpets* are *meant* to be trodden upon, my memory probably misgives me, and it might be a robe, or tapestry, or a table-cloth, or some other expensive and uncynical piece of furniture.

Page 987, line 442. *The 'Bath Guide.'* [The famous *New Bath Guide* of Christopher Anstey.]

Line 448. '*Bouts rimés.*' [The last words or rhymes of a number of verses given to a poet to be filled up.]

Page 988, line 520. *For Gothic daring shown in English money.* 'Ausu Romano, ære Veneto' is the inscription (and well inscribed in this instance) on the sea walls between the Adriatic and Venice. The walls were a republican work of the Venetians; the inscription, I believe, Imperial; and inscribed by Napoleon the *First*. It is time to continue to him that title — there will be a second by and by, 'Spes altera mundi,' *if he live;* let him not defeat it like his father. But, in any case, he will be preferable to Imbeciles. There is a glorious field for him, if he know how to cultivate it.

Line 526. '*Untying*' *squires* '*to fight against the churches.*'

> 'I conjure you, by that which you profess,
> (Howe'er you come to know it,) answer me:
> Though ye *untie* the winds, and let them fight
> Against the *churches.*' — *Macbeth*, IV. i.

Page 990, line 642. '*And champion him to the utmost.*'

> 'Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
> And champion me to the utterance.'
> *Macbeth*, III. ii.

Page 991, line 695. *The very powerful parson, Peter Pith.* Query, *Sidney Smith*, author of *Peter* Plimley's Letters? — PRINTER'S DEVIL.

Page 993, line 820. *What is call'd mobility.* In French '*mobilité*.' I am not sure that mobility is English; but it is expressive of a quality which rather belongs to other climates, though it is sometimes seen to a great extent in our own. It may be defined as an excessive susceptibility of immediate impressions — at the same time without *losing* the past; and is, though sometimes apparently useful to the possessor, a most painful and unhappy attribute.

Page 994, line 913. *Who would not sigh* Αι αι ταν Κυθερειαν. [Alas, Cytherea!]

Page 995, line 920. '*Alma Venus Genetrix!*' [From the famous opening of the *De Rerum Natura*.]

Line 970. *Like that of hell.* '*Lasciate ogni speranza*.' ['Leave all hope behind, ye who enter here,' the inscription over the gate of hell in Dante.]

Page 997, line 21. '*Mule*.' The Italians, at least in some parts of Italy, call bastards and foundlings the *mules* — *why*, I cannot see, unless they mean to infer that the offspring of matrimony are asses.

[Here may be added three poems recently discovered and attributed to Byron with some show of reason. The first was published by H. Buxton Forman in a letter to the *Athenæum* of June 11, 1904. It is addressed to Mary Chaworth (afterwards Mrs. Musters), and was written by Byron with a pencil on the last end-paper and paste-down of a book belonging to Miss Chaworth — the first volume of an English translation, in two volumes, of the *Letters of Madame de Maintenon*, published in London in 1772. It consists of three stanzas, as follows: —

Ah memory torture me no more,
  The present 's all o'ercast
My hopes of future bliss are oer
  In Mercy veil the past.

Why bring those Images to view
  I henceforth must resign
Ah why those happy hours renew
  That never can be mine.

Past pleasure doubles present pain
  To Sorrow adds regret.
Regret and hope are both in vain
  I ask but to Forget.

In the same letter to the *Athenæum* Mr. Forman published the following stanzas, which were found written in Byron's hand on both sides of a single quarto leaf of paper. They had been printed in Galignani's Paris edition of 1837, under the head of "Attributed Poems:" —

TO MY DEAR MARY ANNE

I

Adieu to sweet Mary forever
  From her I must quickly depart
Though the fates us from each other Sever
  Still her Image will dwell in my Heart.

II

The flame that within my breast burns,
  Is unlike what in Lovers hearts Glows
The Love which for Mary I feel,
  Is far purer than Cupid bestows.

III

I wish not your peace to disturb,
  I wish not your Joys to molest;
Mistake not my passion for Love
  'T is your friendship alone I request.

IV

Not ten thousand Lovers could feel
  The friendship my bosom contains
It will ever within my heart dwell
  While the warm blood flows through my Veins.

V

May the Ruler of Heaven look down,
  And my Mary from evil defend;
May She neer know Adversity's Frown
  May her happiness neer have an end.

VI

Once more my sweet Girl Adieu
  Farewell I with anguish repeat,
Forever Ill think upon you
  While this Heart In my bosom shall beat.

A third poem was printed in two issues of *Good Words*, June and July, 1904, and is vouched for by the editor of that periodical. It is contained in three loose sheets of hand-made paper of the time, used for the rough draft of the composition and the jotting down of rhymes and ideas, and a small quarto copy-book (6¼ inches by 7¾ inches) in which a fair transcription has been made of the finished stanzas, with gaps of one or more pages left between the stanzas, or groups of two or more stanzas, to be filled up as the poem progressed. The theme was evidently suggested by the Coronation of George IV., and the stanzas must have been written just before the proposed date of the ceremony, August 1, 1820, or the actual date, July 19, 1821. The completed stanzas with the comment in *Good Words* are as follows: —

THE KING OF THE HUMBUGS

I

The Coronation! Like a Lottery puff,
I 'll make the world stand forward as my text,
'T will catch the passer's eye, and that 's enough —
I don't pretend that George the Fourth is fixed.
(Who knows how soon her Majesty 'll be off?
It may be this year, or perhaps the next.)
I 've not a word to say upon the matter,
Either by way of gossip or of satire.

II

I leave the ceremonies in the Abbey
To those who see them, which I never shall,
(Some thought the Dean and Chapter's conduct shabby,
Who sold their Choir at so much every stall,
A guinea an inch!) No, I 'm not such a baby.
The Newspaper will tell it to us all.
I never could, in spite of all the talk,
Give much to see how men and women walk.

III

Then I 've no taste for sitting hugger mugger.
We 'll have a coronation of our own,
You shall have tickets, we 'll be vastly snugger,
Step in and see — Here is a royal crown:
But whether it is made of paste or sugar
Or Diamonds is not easy to be known,
But then in one respect we should prefer it
Before all crowns; it is adjudged to merit.

IV

To merit! What, the Congress takes no part?
The Holy Alliance, has that nought to say?
I thought I knew their principles by heart;
Can they sit by and see crowns given away?
Even so. Unless some one amongst them start
To win the prize, as some of them well may,
For 't is to-day the Humbugs have appointed
To see their King elected and anointed.

V

Where are these Humbugs? O the search I 've made
To find their country! 'T was a tedious process,
I 've turned to every Atlas in the trade,
Systems complete with all their texts and glosses,
I 've called all Tours and Voyages to my aid.
Last, in despair, I turned to Captain Ross's,
Hoping to see their Kingdom marked perhaps
Somewhere near Croker's Mountains on his maps.

VI

Poor Croker! It is very hard to lose
One's Mountains! But a truce with maps and charts.
For some one whispers — (could it be my Muse?)
That Humbugs are found natives of all parts,
And scattered through all nations like the Jews,
And have, like them, great skill in little arts,
Yet not, like them, held up to scorn and laughter,
They 're feasted, listened to, and followed after.

VII

Then I have known some few — It is a sect
Enjoys so much beyond mere toleration
(More even than the Catholics expect)
There 's scarce a post of honour in the nation,
Never a star with which they 're not bedecked.
To have a King then of their own creation
Is but one step, nay scarce a step I doubt
When Almack's tickets fly to find them out.

. . . .

Here there occurs a hiatus in the finished copy, Byron evidently being unable to get the next stanza to his liking. In the draft, however, there are a series of incomplete stanzas and half-worked-out ideas. He seems first to have contemplated describing the procession of Humbugs. Then, breaking off for a time, he turns to the consideration of the question, who is most fit to be King of the Humbugs! The prosecution of this theme being probably for the time not congenial, Byron leaves it, to turn to the discussion of another point in his satire — the place where the coronation, or the election, of the Humbug Monarch was to be held. In this direction he was for a brief period more successful, the next three stanzas having apparently been written at once into the copy-book, without any previous drafting, the sequence of the rough copy going to prove that no part of it has been lost, and such alternative readings as have occurred to Byron being inserted in the fair copy.

VIII

Some thought no properer spot could be assigned
Than easy Holland's scribbler-sheltering roof,
For 't was a haunt familiar to their kind
Where they could creep and feed and strut and puff,
All had discoursed there, and some few had dined —
But then my lord's consent was not enough;
There was the Princess too of Madagascar —
And no one had the courage e'en to ask her.

IX

The number qualified was found prodigious,
And all with very palpable pretensions.

Both civil, military, and religious,
Some there had patents, others stars and pensions,
Half those who print, and with their thoughts oblige us,
The authors of all manners of inventions.
Oxford and Cambridge severally sent Messrs. . . .
With very good degrees . . . and some professors.

X

There must be room to swagger and to bluster,
To bustle and look big or all will fail,
Some of the places which have been discussed are
Enough perhaps to lodge them in detail,
And by instalments — But a general muster!
No house is sure of a sufficient scale,
No, not his gracious Majesty's pavilion
Though that is said to have cost him near a million.

. . . .

Another break. That he endeavored to follow up his temporary success is evident from the rough draft, mainly composed of suggestions of various places where the ceremony should be held. At last he gets the idea of holding it in the now vacated booths of Smithfield fair, and goes ahead again: —

XI

We all I think must own a happy hit owes
Much to the aptness of the opportunity.
The Fair had ceased, and Brooks's and Polito's
Had summoned homeward their four-legged community
With Bears and Sloths with two toes and with three toes.
The Booths might now be entered with impunity,
And there they stood so handy and inviting
For all the Humbugs both to speak and write in.

It is interesting to trace the train of Byron's thought here. His first idea was to write 'Pidcock's or Polito's,' but it then occurred to him that the satire would be more complete, if he coupled 'Brooks's' with the menagerie, treating the occupants of both as so many varieties of wild beasts.

XII

Why the Bonassus budged is still a question,
Some blame him for not standing firm on ground,
And think that 't was a plausible suggestion
To have him named a candidate and crowned,
Since there 's no clause that Humbugs must be Christian,
And though four legs has but an awkward sound,
There is no act or statute old or new
That ever has restricted Kings to two.

XIII

Nebuchadnezzar grazed and reigned on four —
One Cæsar made a Consul of his horse —
Far longer ears some Consuls since have wore,
(So that the Cæsar might have chosen worse)
Whatever comes to their long ears, and more
Our Consuls nowadays write home of course.
O had Caligula preferred an ass,
He might have found one Consul at Patras.

Byron was now tired of his task. A number of attempts that are little more than memoranda for rhymes are entered on the copy-book. But leaving the intermediate stanzas to take care of themselves for the time being, he resumes his theme at a later point with slightly better fortune.

XIV

When Wood came forward all cried out 't is pity
He don't try somewhere else. This won't do here.
Remember, Wood, that Smithfield 's in the city,
You 're known — You might get snuff-boxes elsewhere.
Some even boldly ventured to be witty
Upon his civic or political career,
While those who knew him better as a brewer
Wished that the ingredients of his beer were fewer.

XV

This was a sleeping deathblow to the hopes (Note. Some read hops)
Of all the orators of Common Council,
Who came full charged with metaphors and tropes
Though some wags whispered that they would pronounce ill.
See how dejected honest Waithman mopes,
Like one next morning after cheery bounce ill,
Squats him down quietly among the dumb ones
And looks as small as in the House of Commons.

The MS., both rough draft and fair copy, becomes chaotic at this point, but the remaining two stanzas are perfect.

XVI

For suits and services, long, hard at work
A Court of Claims has sat in solemn 'séance' —
Holland provides the King a knife and fork,
Burgess of sauces has the sole purveyance,
To find him his first dish of tea Dow Cork
And the Miss Berrys have it in abeyance,
Hunt gives an ounce of imitative (?) coffee
Worthy, he says, the Sultan or the Sophy.

XVII

Soaps (aye, if any he should chance to use)
There are some fifty species to his hands —
And all with names most classic and abstruse —
Blacking from Day and Martin's in the Strand —
Waterproof coats, impenetrable shoes,
Anti-attrition if he post by land,
Or, if he prove a sailing King, air jackets
Much worn by those blown up in the steam packets.[1]

INDEXES

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

Absent or present, still to thee, 169.
Adieu, adieu! my native shore, 5.
Adieu, thou Hill! where early joy, 145.
Adieu, ye joys of La Valette! 163.
Ægle, beauty and poet, has two little crimes, 237.
Ah! gentle, fleeting, wav'ring sprite, 87.
Ah, heedless girl! why thus disclose, 146.
Ah! Love was never yet without, 172.
Ah! — What should follow slips from my reflection, 968.
And dost thou ask the reason of my sadness? 229.
And thou art dead, as young and fair, 167.
And thou wert sad — yet I was not with thee, 212.
And 'thy true faith can alter never?' 173.
And wilt thou weep when I am low? 152.
Anne's Eye is liken'd to the *Sun*, 143.
A noble Lady of the Italian shore, 199.
As by the fix'd decrees of Heaven, 140.
As o'er the cold sepulchral stone, 157.
A spirit pass'd before me: I beheld, 222.
As the Liberty lads o'er the sea, 229.
Away, away, ye notes of woe! 165.
Away, away, your flattering arts, 86.
Away with your fictions of flimsy romance, 92.
Away, ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of roses! 117.
A year ago you swore, fond she! 236.

Behold the blessings of a lucky lot! 237.
Belshazzar! from the banquet turn, 185.
Beneath Blessington's eyes, 239.
Beside the confines of the Ægean main, 161.
Beware! beware! of the Black Friar, 285.
Bob Southey! You 're a poet — Poet-laureate, 745.
Born in the garret, in the kitchen bred, 208.
Brave Champions! go on with the farce! 237.
Breeze of the night in gentler sighs, 150.
Bright be the place of thy soul! 151.
But once I dared to lift my eyes, 205.

Candour compels me, Becher! to commend, 118.
Chill and mirk is the nightly blast, 158.
Come, blue-eyed maid of heaven! — but thou, alas, 19.
Could I remount the river of my years, 191.
Could Love for ever, 199.
Cruel Cerinthus! does the fell disease, 87.

Dear are the days of youth! 129.
Dear Becher, you tell me to mix with mankind, 128.
Dear Doctor, I have read your play, 231.
Dear Long, in this sequester'd scene, 133.
Dear object of defeated care! 161.
Dear, simple girl, those flattering arts, 86.
Dorset! whose early steps with mine have stray'd, 93.
Doubtless, sweet girl! the hissing lead, 99.
Do you know Dr. Nott? 238.

Eliza, what fools are the Mussulman sect, 116.
Equal to Jove that youth must be, 87.
Ere the daughter of Brunswick is cold in her grave, 201.
Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind! 402.

Fair Albion, smiling, sees her son depart, 162.
Fame, wisdom, love, and power were mine, 219.
Famed for contemptuous breach of sacred ties, 228.
Famed for their civil and domestic quarrels, 228.
Fare thee well! and if for ever, 207.
Farewell! if ever fondest prayer, 151.
Farewell to the Land where the gloom of my Glory, 186.
Father of Light! great God of Heaven! 132.
Few years have pass'd since thou and I, 153.
Fill the goblet again! for I never before, 155.
For Orford and for Waldegrave, 238.
Friend of my youth! when young we roved, 137.
From the last hill that looks on thy once holy dome, 221.
From this emblem what variance your motto evinces, 228.

God maddens him whom 't is his will to lose, 230.
God, the Eternal! Infinite! All-wise! 627.
Good plays are scarce, 225.
Great Jove, to whose almighty throne, 89.

Hail, Muse! *et cetera.* — We left Juan sleeping, 801.
Harriet! To see such Circumspection, 151.
He hath wrong'd his queen, but still he is her lord, 550.
Here once engaged the stranger's view, 150.
Here 's a happy new year! but with reason, 235.
Here 's to her who long, 228.
He, unto whom thou art so partial, 239.
He who sublime in epic numbers roll'd, 87.
High in the midst, surrounded by his peers, 111.
Hills of Annesley! bleak and barren, 95.
His father's sense, his mother's grace, 233.
How came you in Hob's pound to cool, 235.
How sweetly shines through azure skies, 101.

Hush'd are the winds, and still the evening gloom, 84.
Huzza! Hodgson, we are going, 156.

I cannot talk of Love to thee, 179.
I enter thy garden of roses, 162.
If fate should seal my Death to-morrow, 144.
If for silver, or for gold, 234.
If from great nature's or our own abyss, 955.
If, in the month of dark December, 160.
If sometimes in the haunts of men, 168.
If that high world, which lies beyond, 217.
I had a dream, which was not all a dream, 189.
I heard thy fate without a tear, 186.
'*I lay my branch of laurel down*,' 227.
Ill-fated Heart! and can it be, 168.
In digging up your bones, Tom Paine, 235.
In hearts like thine ne'er may I hold a place, 227.
In law an infant and in years a boy, 100.
In moments to delight devoted, 175.
In Nottingham county there lives at Swan Green, 223.
In one dread night our city saw, and sigh'd, 169.
In one who felt as once he felt, 148.
I now mean to be serious; — it is time, 941.
In the beginning was the Word next God, 466.
In the dome of my Sires as the clear moonbeam falls, 164.
In thee, I fondly hoped to clasp, 85.
In the valley of waters we wept o'er the day, 223.
In the year since Jesus died for men, 384.
In this belovèd marble view, 229.
I read the *Christabel*, 230.
I saw thee weep — the big bright tear, 218.
Is not the messenger return'd? 499.
I speak not, I trace not, I breathe not thy name, 182.
Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child, 35.
I stood beside the grave of him who blazed, 190.
I stood in Venice on the Bridge of Sighs, 55.
It is the hour when from the boughs, 396.
I want a hero: an uncommon want, 747.
I watch'd thee when the foe was at our side, 205.
I wish to tune my quivering lyre, 88.
I would I were a careless child, 135.
I would to heaven that I were so much clay, 745.

John Adams lies here, of the parish of Southwell, 224.

Kind Reader! take your choice to cry or laugh, 161.
Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle, 323.

Lady, accept the box a hero wore, 238.
Lady! if for the cold and cloudy clime, 455.
Lady! in whose heroic port, 200.
Lesbia! since far from you I 've ranged, 98.
Let Folly smile, to view the names, 85.
Long years! — It tries the thrilling frame to bear, 436.
Lucietta, my deary, 239.

Maid of Athens, ere we part, 160.
Marion, why that pensive brow? 100.
Mingle with the genial bowl, 139.
Montgomery! true, the common lot, 127.
Mrs. Wilmot sate scribbling a play, 234.
Muse of the many-twinkling feet! whose charms, 273.
Must thou go, my glorious Chief, 186.
My boat is on the shore, 230.
My dear Mr. Murray, 232.
My hair is grey, but not with years, 402.
My love, be calmer! 671.
My sister! my sweet sister! if a name, 211.
My soul is dark — Oh! quickly string, 218.

Nay, smile not at my sullen brow, 17.
Newstead! fast-falling, once-resplendent dome! 119.
Nisus, the guardian of the portal, stood, 105.
No breath of air to break the wave, 310.
No infant Sotheby, whose dauntless head, 231.
Nose and chin would shame a knocker, 196.
No specious splendour of this stone, 113.
Nothing so difficult as a beginning, 816.
Not in those climes where I have late been straying, 2.

O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea, 338.
Of all the barbarous middle ages, that, 929.
Of all the twice ten thousand bards, 233.
Of rhymes I printed seven volumes, 232.
Of two fair virgins, modest, though admired, 195.
Oh, Anne! your offences to me have been grievous, 147.
'Oh! banish care' — such ever be, 164.
Oh blood and thunder! and oh blood and wounds! 878.
Oh, Castlereagh! thou art a patriot now, 238.
Oh! could Le Sage's demon's gift, 95.
Oh! did those eyes, instead of fire, 97.
Oh factious viper! whose envenom'd tooth, 114.
Oh, Friend, for ever loved, for ever dear! 85.
Oh! had my fate been join'd with thine, 134.
Oh how I wish that an embargo, 225.
Oh Lady! when I left the shore, 157.
Oh, Mariamne! now for thee, 221.
Oh! might I kiss those eyes of fire, 88.
Oh! — my lonely—lonely—lonely—Pillow! 204.
Oh never talk again to me, 159.
Oh say not, sweet Anne, that the Fates have decreed, 147.
Oh! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom, 218.
Oh, talk not to me of a name great in story, 204.
Oh, thou! in Hellas deem'd of heavenly birth, 3.
Oh! thou that roll'st above thy glorious Fire, 139.
Oh Venice! Venice! when thy marble walls, 452.
Oh! weep for those that wept by Babel's stream, 217.
Oh well done Lord E——n! and better done R——r! 225.
Oh! well I know your subtle Sex, 143.
Oh, Wellington! (or 'Villainton' — for Fame, 896.

Oh when shall the grave hide for ever my sorrow? 91.
Oh yes, I will own we were dear to each other, 136.
Oh ye! who teach the ingenuous youth of nations, 774.
Oh you, who in all names can tickle the town, 226.
O Love! O Glory! what are ye who fly, 867.
Once fairly set out on his party of pleasure, 228.
Once more in man's frail world! which I had left, 456.
One struggle more, and I am free, 166.
On Jordan's banks the Arab's camels stray, 217.
O Thou! who rollest in yon azure field, 140.
O thou yclep'd by vulgar sons of Men, 224.
Our father sleeps: it is the hour when they, 655.
Our life is twofold: Sleep hath its own world, 213.
Our nation's foes lament on Fox's death, 114.
Out, hunchback! 722.

Parent of golden dreams, Romance! 118.
Posterity will ne'er survey, 235.

Rail on, Rail on, ye heartless Crew! 141.
Remember him whom passion's power, 174.
Remember thee! remember thee! 171.
Remind me not, remind me not, 152.
River, that rollest by the ancient walls, 198.
Rousseau, Voltaire, our Gibbon, and De Staël, 192.

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate, 285.
She walks in beauty, like the night, 216.
Since now the hour is come at last, 89.
Since our Country, our God — Oh, my Sire! 218.
Since the refinement of this polish'd age, 113.
Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run, 268.
So Castlereagh has cut his throat! — The worst, 238.
So *He* has cut his throat at last! — He! Who? 238.
Sons of the Greeks, arise! 161.
So we'll go no more a roving, 229.
Spot of my youth! whose hoary branches sigh, 138.
Star of the brave! — whose beam hath shed, 188.
Start not — nor deem my spirit fled, 154.
Still must I hear? — shall hoarse Fitzgerald bawl, 241.
Strahan, Tonson, Lintot of the times, 234.
Stranger! behold, interr'd together, 163.
Sun of the sleepless! melancholy star! 220.
Sweet girl! though only once we met, 112.

Tambourgi! Tambourgi! thy 'larum afar, 30.
The antique Persians taught three useful things, 980.
The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold, 222.
The braziers, it seems, are preparing to pass, 237.
The castled crag of Drachenfels, 43.
The chain I gave was fair to view, 168.
The dead have been awaken'd — shall I sleep? 240.
The Devil return'd to hell by two, 176.
The Gods of old are silent on their shore, 205.
The 'good old times' — all times when old are good, 298.
The harp the monarch minstrel swept, 216.
The isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece! 812.
The King was on his throne, 220.
The kiss, dear maid! thy lip has left, 162.
The lamp must be replenish'd, but even then, 478.
The land where I was born sits by the seas, 476.
The man of firm and noble soul, 88.
The modest bard, like many a bard unknown, 162.
The Moorish King rides up and down, 194.
The Moralists tell us that Loving is Sinning, 145.
The morning watch was come; the vessel lay, 415.
The Night came on the Waters — all was rest, 184.
The 'Origin of Love!' — Ah! why, 173.
There be none of Beauty's daughters, 188.
There is a mystic thread of life, 143.
There is a tear for all that die, 183.
There is a tide in the affairs of men, 852.
There is no more for me to hope, 174.
There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away, 185.
There's something in a stupid ass, 234.
There was a time, I need not name, 152.
The roses of love glad the garden of life, 99.
The sacred song that on mine ear, 173.
These locks, which fondly thus entwine, 101.
The Serfs are glad through Lara's wide domain, 366.
The Son of Love and Lord of War I sing, 239.
The spell is broke, the charm is flown! 159.
The wild gazelle on Judah's hills, 217.
The world is a bundle of hay, 237.
The world is full of orphans: firstly, those, 996.
They say that Hope is happiness, 223.
Thine eyes' blue tenderness, thy long fair hair, 175.
Think'st thou I saw thy beauteous eyes, 90.
This Band, which bound thy yellow hair, 128.
This day, of all our days, has done, 236.
This faint resemblance of thy charms, 98.
This votive pledge of fond esteem, 92.
Those flaxen locks, those eyes of blue, 150.
Thou art not false, but thou art fickle, 172.
Though the day of my destiny's over, 210.
Thou Power! who hast ruled me through infancy's days, 148.
Thou whose spell can raise the dead, 219.
Through cloudless skies, in silvery sheen, 159.
Through life's dull road, so dim and dirty, 236.
Through thy battlements, Newstead, the hollow winds whistle, 86.
Thy cheek is pale with thought, but not from woe, 175.
Thy days are done, thy fame begun, 218.
Thy verse is 'sad' enough, no doubt, 147.
Time! on whose arbitrary wing, 171.
'T is done — and shivering in the gale, 156.
'T is done — but yesterday a King! 180.
'T is done! — I saw it in my dreams, 128.

'T is fifty years, and yet their fray, 197.
'T is known, at least it should be, that throughout, 440.
'T is midnight — but it is not dark, 196.
'T is time this heart should be unmoved, 206.
Titan! to whose immortal eyes, 191.
To be the father of the fatherless, 199.
To hook the reader, you, John Murray, 230.
'T was after dread Pultowa's day, 407.
'T was now the hour when Night had driven, 88.
'T was now the noon of night, and all was still, 142.

Unhappy Dives! in an evil hour, 223.
Up to battle! Sons of Suli, 240.

Warriors and chiefs! should the shaft or the sword, 219.
We do not curse thee, Waterloo! 187.
Weep, daughter of a royal line, 168.
Well! thou art happy, and I feel, 154.
Were *Death* an *evil*, would *I* let thee *live?* 237.
Were my bosom as false as thou deem'st it to be, 221.
We sate down and wept by the waters, 222.
What are to me those honours or renown, 206.
What are you doing now, 229.
What matter the pangs of a husband and father, 238.
What news, what news? Queen Orraca, 225.
'What say *I?*' — not a syllable further in prose, 227.
When all around grew drear and dark, 209.
When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home, 236.
When amatory poets sing their loves, 831.
When Bishop Berkeley said 'there was no matter,' 918.
When coldness wraps this suffering clay, 220.
When Dryden's fool, 'unknowing what he sought,' 171.
Whene'er I view those lips of thine, 90.
'When energising objects men pursue,' 170.
When fierce conflicting passions urge, 111.
When Friendship or Love our sympathies move, 114.
When, from the heart where Sorrow sits, 174.
When I dream that you love me, you 'll surely forgive, 97.
When I hear you express an affection so warm, 91.
When I roved a young Highlander o'er the dark heath, 135.
When Man, expell'd from Eden's bowers, 155.
When Newton saw an apple fall, he found, 907.
When slow Disease, with all her host of pains, 122.
When some proud son of man returns to earth, 154.
When the last sunshine of expiring day, 192.
When the vain triumph of the imperial lord, 183.
When Thurlow this damn'd nonsense sent, 226.
When Time, or soon or late, shall bring, 166.
When, to their airy hall, my fathers' voice, 85.
When we two parted, 151.
Where are those honours, Ida! once your own, 93.
Where is the prisoner? 595.
Who hath not glow'd above the page where fame, 182.
'Who kill'd John Keats?' 237.
Who would not laugh, if Lawrence, hired to grace, 256.
Why, how now, saucy Tom, 237.
Why, Pigot, complain of this damsel's disdain, 115.
Why should my anxious breast repine, 131.
With death doom'd to grapple, 235.
Without a stone to mark the spot, 165.
Woman! experience might have told me, 97.
Would you go to the House by the true gate, 236.

Ye Cupids, droop each little head, 87.
Ye scenes of my childhood, whose loved recollection, 96.
Yes! wisdom shines in all his mien, 226.
You ask for a '*Volume of Nonsense*,' 236.
You call me still your *life*. — Oh! change the word, 175.
You have ask'd for a verse — the request, 205.
Young Oak! when I planted thee deep in the ground, 149.
You 're too late, 277.
Your pardon, my friend, if my rhymes did offend, 116.
You say you love, and yet your eye, 90.
Youth, Nature, and relenting Jove, 225.

INDEX OF TITLES

[*The titles of major works and of general divisions are set in* SMALL CAPITALS.]

Abydos, The Bride of, 323.
Adams, John, of Southwell, Epitaph on, 224.
Address intended to be recited at the Caledonian Meeting, 182.
Address spoken at the Opening of Drury-Lane Theatre, 169.
Adieu, The, 145.
Adrian's Address to his Soul when Dying, 87.
Æschylus, From the Prometheus Vinctus of, 89.
Affection, Answer to ——'s Professions of, 227.
Age of Bronze, The; or, Carmen Seculare et Annus haud Mirabilis, 298.
A—— H——, Miss, On the Eyes of, 143.
Album, Lines written in, at Malta, 157.
Alhama, A Very Mournful Ballad on the Siege and Conquest of, 194.
'All is vanity, saith the preacher,' 219.
Ambracian Gulf, Stanzas written in Passing the, 159.
Anacreon, From, 88.
Anacreon, From, 88.
Anacreon, Translation from, 139.
'And dost thou ask the reason of my sadness?' 229.
'And thou art dead, as young and fair,' 167.
'And wilt thou weep when I am low?' 152.
Anne, To, 147.
Another Simple Ballat, 234.
Answer to a Beautiful Poem, entitled 'The Common Lot,' 127.
Answer to Some Elegant Verses, 118.
Answer to ——'s Professions of Affection, 227.
Aristomenes, 205.
'A spirit pass'd before me,' 222.
'As the Liberty lads o'er the sea,' 229.
Augusta, Epistle to, 210.
Augusta, Stanzas to, 209.
Augusta, Stanzas to, 210.
'Away, away, ye notes of woe!' 165.

Babylon, By the Rivers of, we sat down and wept, 222.
Ballad to the Tune of 'Sally in our Alley,' 233.
Ballat, Another Simple, 234.
Becher, Rev. J. T., Lines addressed to the, 128.
Belshazzar, To, 185.
Belshazzar, Vision of, 220.
Beppo, 440.
Blacket, Joseph, Epitaph for, 163.
Blessington, Countess of, To the, 205.
Blues, The, 277.
Bowles and Campbell, 237.
'Brave Champions! go on with the farce,' 237.
Bray, The New Vicar of, 238.
Bride of Abydos, The, 323.
'Bright be the place of thy soul,' 151.
Buonaparte, Napoleon, Ode to, 180.

Cadiz, The Girl of, 159.
Cain, 626.
'Cain,' Thoughts for a Speech of Lucifer, in the Tragedy of, 237.
Caledonian Meeting, Address intended to be recited at the, 182.
Calmar and Orla, The Death of, 129.
Caroline, To, 90.
Caroline, To, 90.
Caroline, To, 91.
Caroline, To, 91.
'Carthon,' Ossian's Address to the Sun in, 139.
Catullus, Imitated from, 88.
Catullus, Translation from, 87.
Cephalonia, Journal in, 240.
CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE, 1.
Childish Recollections, 122.
Chillon, Sonnet on, 402.
Chillon, The Prisoner of, 402.
Churchill's Grave, 190.
Clare, Earl of, To the, 137.
College Examination, Thoughts suggested by a, 111.
'Common Lot, The,' Answer to a Beautiful Poem, entitled, 127.
Condolatory Address, 183.
Conquest, The, 239.
Corinth, The Siege of, 384.
Cornelian, The, 113.
Cornelian Heart which was broken, On a, 168.
Corsair, The, 337.
Country, Soliloquy of a Bard in the, 142.
Curse of Minerva, The, 268.

D——, To, 85.
Dallas, R. C., 226.
Damætas, 100.
Dante, The Prophecy of, 455.
Darkness, 189.
'Dear Doctor, I have read your play,' 231.
Death of Calmar and Orla, The, 129.
Deed of Separation, Endorsement to the, in the April of 1816, 236.
Deformed Transformed, The, 722.
Delawarr, George, Earl, To, 136.
Destruction of Sennacherib, The, 222.
Devil's Drive, The, 175.
Dives, To (William Beckford). A Fragment, 223.
DOMESTIC PIECES, 207.
DON JUAN, 744.
Dorset, Duke of, To the, 93.
DRAMAS, 477.
Dream, The, 213.
Drury-Lane Theatre, Address spoken at the Opening of, 169.
Duel, The, 197.

E——, To, 85.
Egotism. A Letter to J. T. Becher, 144.
Elegant Verses, Answer to Some, 118.
Elegiac Stanzas on the Death of Sir Peter Parker, Bart., 183.
Elegy, 237.
Elegy on Newstead Abbey, 119.
Eliza, To, 116.
Emma, To, 89.
Endorsement to the Deed of Separation, in the April of 1816, 236.
England, Stanzas to a Lady on Leaving, 156.
English Bards and Scotch Reviewers, 241.
E Nihilo Nihil; or an Epigram Bewitched, 232.
EPHEMERAL VERSES, 223.
Epigram on an Old Lady who had Some Curious Notions respecting the Soul, 223.
Epigrams, 238.
Epilogue, 234.
Episode of Nisus and Euryalus, The, 105.
Epistle to Augusta, 210.
Epistle to a Friend, 164.
Epitaph for Joseph Blacket, 163.
Epitaph on a Friend, 85.
Epitaph on John Adams, of Southwell, 224.
Epitaph on Virgil and Tibullus, Translation of the, 87.
Epitaph, Substitute for an, 161.
Euripides, Translation from the Medea of, 111.
Euthanasia, 166.

Fan, On Finding a, 148.
Fare thee well, 207.
'Farewell! if ever fondest prayer,' 151.
Farewell Petition to J. C. H., Esq., 224.
Farewell to Malta, 163.
Farewell to the Muse, 148.
'Fill the goblet,' 155.
First Kiss of Love, The, 92.
Florence and Pisa, Stanzas written on the Road between, 204.
Florence, To, 157.
'For Orford and for Waldegrave,' 238.
Foscari, The Two, 595.
Fox, Mr., On the Death of, 114.
Fragment, A, 85.
Fragment, A, 191.
Fragment of an Epistle to Thomas Moore, 227.
Fragment from the 'Monk of Athos,' 161.
Fragment written shortly after the Marriage of Miss Chaworth, 95.
Frame Bill, An Ode to the Framers of the, 225.
Francesca of Rimini, 476.
French, From the, 186.
French, From the, 237.
French, Ode from the, 187.
Friend, Epistle to a, 164.
From Anacreon, 88.
From Anacreon, 88.
From the Portuguese, 175.

Gazelle, The Wild, 217.
Giaour, The, 310.
Girl of Cadiz, The, 159.
'God maddens him whom 't is his will to lose,' 230.
'Good plays are scarce,' 225.
Granta — A Medley, 95.
Great Public School, On a Change of Masters at a, 93.
Greece, Last Words on, 206.
Greek War Song, Δεῦτε παῖδες τῶν Ἑλλήνων, Translation of the Famous, 161.

Hales-Owen, Verses found in a Summer-House at, 171.
Harriet, To, 151.
Harrow, Lines written beneath an Elm in the Churchyard of, 138.
Harrow, On Revisiting, 150.
Harrow on the Hill, On a Distant View of the Village and School of, 96.
Heaven and Earth, 655.
HEBREW MELODIES, 216.
'Here's a happy new year! but with reason,' 235.
'Here's to her who long,' 228.
Herod's Lament for Mariamne, 221.
Hindoo Air, Stanzas to a, 204.
Hints from Horace, 256.
Hodgson, Mr., Lines to, 156.
Hoppner, John William Rizzo, On the Birth of, 233.
Horace, Translation from, 88.
HOURS OF IDLENESS, 83.

Ich dien, 228.
'If for silver, or for gold,' 234.
'If sometimes in the haunts of men,' 168.
'If that high world,' 217.
Imitated from Catullus, 88.
Imitation of Tibullus, 87.
Impromptu, 239.
Impromptu, in Reply to a Friend, 174.
Inscription on the Monument of a Newfoundland Dog, 154.
'In the valley of waters,' 222.
'In this beloved marble view,' 229.
'I read the "Christabel,"' 230.
Irish Avatar, The, 201.
'I saw thee weep,' 218.
Island, The; or, Christian and his Comrades, 415.
ITALIAN POEMS, 436.
'I would I were a careless child,' 135.

J. C. H., Esq., Farewell Petition to, 224.
Jephtha's Daughter, 218.
Jerusalem, On the Day of the Destruction of, by Titus, 221.
Jessy, Stanzas to, 143.
Journal in Cephalonia, 240.
Julian [A Fragment], 184.

Lachin y Gair, 117.
Lady, Stanzas to a, with the Poems of Camoëns, 92.
Lady, To a, 101.
Lady, To a, 128.
Lady, To a, 134.
Lady, To a, 155.
Lamb, Hon. Mrs. George, To the, 173.
Lament of Tasso, The, 436.
L'Amitié est l'Amour sans Ailes, 131.

Lara, 366.
Last Words on Greece, 206.
'Legion of Honour, The,' On the Star of, 188.
Leman, Lake, Sonnet to, 192.
Lesbia, To, 98.
Lines addressed to the Rev. J. T. Becher, 128.
Lines addressed to a Young Lady, 99.
Lines inscribed upon a Cup formed from a Skull, 153.
Lines on Hearing that Lady Byron was Ill, 212.
Lines to Mr. Hodgson, 156.
Lines to a Lady Weeping, 168.
Lines written beneath an Elm in the Churchyard of Harrow, 138.
Lines written beneath a Picture, 161.
Lines written in an Album, at Malta, 157.
Lines written in 'Letters to an Italian Nun and an English Gentleman: by J. J. Rousseau: founded on Facts,' 86.
Lines written in the Travellers' Book at Orchomenus, 162.
Lines written on a Blank Leaf of the 'Pleasures of Memory,' 169.
Long, Edward Noel, Esq., To, 133.
Love and Death, 205.
Love and Gold, 179.
Love, The First Kiss of, 92.
Love's Last Adieu, 99.
Lucietta. A Fragment, 239.

M——, To, 97.
'Maid of Athens, ere we part,' 160.
Malta, Farewell to, 163.
Manfred, 478.
Mariamne, Herod's Lament for, 221.
Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice, 497.
Marion, To, 100.
Martial. Lib. I. Epig. I., 239.
Mary, To, on Receiving her Picture, 98.
Mazeppa, 406.
Minerva, The Curse of, 268.
MISCELLANEOUS POEMS, 139.
'Monk of Athos,' Fragment from the, 161.
Monody on the Death of the Right Hon. R. B. Sheridan, 192.
Moore, Thomas, Fragment of an Epistle to, 227.
Morgante Maggiore, The, 465.
M. S. G., To, 90.
M. S. G., To, 97.
Muse, Farewell to the, 148.
Music, Stanzas for, 182.
Music, Stanzas for, 185.
Music, Stanzas for, 188.
Music, Stanzas for, 223.
'My boat is on the shore,' 230.
'My dear Mr. Murray,' 232.
'My soul is dark,' 218.

Napoleon's Farewell, 186.
Napoleon's Snuff-Box, 238.
Nature, The Prayer of, 132.
Newfoundland Dog, Inscription on the Monument of a, 154.
New Song to the Tune of 'Whare hae ye been a' day,' etc., 235.
Newstead, To an Oak at, 149.
Newstead Abbey, 164.
Newstead Abbey, Elegy on, 119.
Newstead Abbey, On Leaving, 86.
New Vicar of Bray, The, 238.
Nihil, E Nihilo; or an Epigram Bewitched, 232.
Nisus and Euryalus, The Episode of, 105.
'No infant Sotheby, whose dauntless head,' 231.
Nuptials of the Marquis Antonio Cavalli with the Countess Clelia Rasponi of Ravenna, Sonnet on the, 199.

Ode from the French, 187.
Ode on Venice, 452.
Ode to a Lady whose Lover was killed by a Ball, which at the Same Time shivered a Portrait next his Heart, 200.
Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte, 180.
Ode to the Framers of the Frame Bill, An, 225.
'Oh how I wish that an embargo,' 225.
'Oh! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom,' 218.
'Oh! weep for those,' 217.
'Oh you, who in all names can tickle the town,' 226.
On a Change of Masters at a Great Public School, 93.
On a Cornelian Heart which was broken, 168.
On a Distant View of the Village and School of Harrow on the Hill, 96.
On a Royal Visit to the Vaults, 228.
On being asked what was the 'Origin of Love,' 173.
'Once fairly set out on his party of pleasure,' 228.
'One struggle more, and I am free,' 166.
On Finding a Fan, 148.
'On Jordan's banks,' 217.
On Parting, 162.
On Revisiting Harrow, 150.
On Sam Rogers, 196.
On the Birth of John William Rizzo Hoppner, 233.
On the Day of the Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, 221.
On the Death of a Young Lady, 84.
On the Eyes of Miss A—— H——, 143.
On the Quotation, 'And my true faith can alter never,' etc., 173.
On the Star of 'The Legion of Honour,' 188.
On this Day I complete my Thirty-sixth Year, 206.
Orchomenus, Lines written in the Travellers' Book at, 162.
'Origin of Love,' On being asked what was the, 173.
Oscar of Alva, 101.
Ossian's Address to the Sun in 'Carthon,' 139.
Ossian's Address to the Sun, A Version of, 140.

Parenthetical Address, by Dr. Plagiary, 170.
Parisina, 396.
Parker, Sir Peter, Bart., Elegiac Stanzas on the Death of, 183.
Parting, On, 162.
Penelope, To, January 2, 1821, 236.
Picture, Lines written beneath a, 161.

Pignus Amoris, 140.
Pigot, J. M. B., Esq., Reply to Some Verses of, on the Cruelty of his Mistress, 115.
'Pleasures of Memory,' Lines written on a Blank Leaf of the, 169.
Po, Stanzas to the, 198.
Portuguese, From the, 175.
Prayer of Nature, The, 132.
Prince Regent, Sonnet to the, 199.
Prisoner of Chillon, The, 402.
Prologue, An Occasional, 113.
Prometheus, 191.
Prometheus Vinctus of Æschylus, From the, 89.
Prophecy of Dante, The, 455.

Quaker, To a Beautiful, 112.
Queries to Casuists, 145.

'Remember him whom passion's power,' 174.
'Remember thee! remember!' 171.
Remembrance, 128.
'Remind me not, remind me not,' 152.
Reply to Some Verses of J. M. B. Pigot, Esq., on the Cruelty of his Mistress, 115.
Revanche, La, 174.
Rogers, Sam, On, 196.
Romaic Love Song, Translation of a, 172.
Romaic Song, Μπένω μεσ' τὸ περιβόλι, 'Ωραιοτάτη Χαηδή, κ. τ. λ., Translation of the, 162.
Romance, To, 118.
Royal Visit to the Vaults, On a, 228.

Same, To the, 147.
Sardanapalus, 550.
SATIRES, 240.
Saul, 219.
Saul before his Last Battle, Song of, 219.
Sennacherib, The Destruction of, 222.
Sestos to Abydos, Written after Swimming from, 160.
Sheridan, Right Hon. R. B., Monody on the Death of the, 192.
'She walks in beauty,' 216.
SHORTER POEMS, 83.
Siege of Corinth, The, 384.
Sighing Strephon, To the, 116.
Sketch, A, 208.
Skull, Lines inscribed upon a Cup formed from a, 153.
Soliloquy of a Bard in the Country, 142.
Son, To my, 150.
Song. 'Breeze of the night in gentler sighs,' 150.
Song of Saul before his Last Battle, 219.
Song to the Suliotes, 240.
Sonnet on Chillon, 402.
Sonnet on the Nuptials of the Marquis Antonio Cavalli with the Countess Clelia Rasponi of Ravenna, 199.
Sonnet, To Genevra, 175.
Sonnet, To the Same, 175.
Sonnet to Lake Leman, 192.
Sonnet to the Prince Regent, 199.
Soul, Epigram on an Old Lady who had Some Curious Notions respecting the, 223.
'So we 'll go no more a roving,' 229.
Stanzas composed during a Thunder-Storm, 158.
Stanzas. 'Could Love for ever,' 199.
Stanzas for Music, 182.
Stanzas for Music, 185.
Stanzas for Music, 188.
Stanzas for Music, 223.
Stanzas. 'I heard thy fate without a tear,' 186.
Stanzas to Augusta, 209.
Stanzas to Augusta, 210.
Stanzas to a Hindoo Air, 204.
Stanzas to Jessy, 143.
Stanzas to a Lady on Leaving England, 156.
Stanzas to a Lady, with the Poems of Camoëns, 92.
Stanzas to the Po, 198.
Stanzas written in Passing the Ambracian Gulf, 159.
Stanzas written on the Road between Florence and Pisa, 204.
'Strahan, Tonson, Lintot of the time,' 234.
Substitute for an Epitaph, 161.
Suliotes, Song to the, 240.
Sun, A Version of Ossian's Address to the, 140.
'Sun of the sleepless,' 220.

TALES, CHIEFLY ORIENTAL, 309.
Tasso, The Lament of, 436.
Tear, The, 114.
'The braziers, it seems, are preparing to pass,' 236.
'The chain I gave,' 168.
'The harp the monarch minstrel swept,' 216.
'There was a time, I need not name,' 152.
'The spell is broke, the charm is flown,' 159.
'The world is a bundle of hay,' 237.
'Thou art not false, but thou art fickle,' 172.
Thoughts for a Speech of Lucifer, in the Tragedy of 'Cain,' 237.
Thoughts suggested by a College Examination, 111.
'Through life's dull road, so dim and dirty,' 236.
Thunder-Storm, Stanzas composed during a, 158.
Thurlow, Lord, To, 227.
'Thy days are done,' 218.
Thyrza, To, 165.
Tibullus, Imitation of, 87.
Time, To, 171.
To ——, 143.
To ——, 205.
To a Beautiful Quaker, 112.
To a Knot of Ungenerous Critics, 141.
To a Lady, 101.
To a Lady, 128.
To a Lady, 134.
To a Lady, 155.
To Anne, 147.
To the Same, 147.
To an Oak at Newstead, 149.
To a Vain Lady, 146.
To a Youthful Friend, 153.
To Belshazzar, 185.
To Caroline, 90.
To Caroline, 90.
To Caroline, 91.
To Caroline, 91.
To D——, 85.
To E——, 85.

To Edward Noel Long, Esq., 133.
To Eliza, 116.
To Emma, 89.
To Florence, 157.
To George, Earl Delawarr, 136.
To Harriet, 151.
'To hook the reader, you, John Murray,' 230.
To Lesbia, 98.
To Lord Thurlow, 227.
To M——, 97.
To Marion, 100.
To Mary, on Receiving her Picture, 98.
To M. S. G., 90.
To M. S. G., 97.
To my Son, 150.
To Penelope, January 2, 1821, 236.
To Romance, 118.
To the Author of a Sonnet beginning, '"Sad is my verse," you say, "and yet no tear,"' 147.
To the Countess of Blessington, 205.
To the Duke of Dorset, 93.
To the Earl of Clare, 137.
To the Hon. Mrs. George Lamb, 173.
To Thyrza, 165.
To Time, 171.
To Woman, 97.
Translation from Anacreon, 139.
Translation from Catullus, 87.
Tanslation from Catullus. Ad Lesbiam, 87.
Translation from Horace, 88.
Translation from the Medea of Euripides, 111.
Translation from Vittorelli, 195.
Translation of a Romaic Love Song, 172.
Translation of the Epitaph on Virgil and Tibullus, 87.
Translation of the Famous Greek War Song, Δεῦτε παῖδες τῶν Ἑλλήνων, 161.
Translation of the Romaic Song, Μπένω μεσ' τὸ περιβέλι, Ὠραιοτάτη Χαηδή, κ. τ. λ., 162.

Ungenerous Critics, To a Knot of, 141.

Vain Lady, To a, 146.
Venice, 196.
Venice, Ode on, 452.
Verses found in a Summer-House at Hales-Owen, 171.
Vision of Belshazzar, 220.
Vision of Judgment, The, 283.
Vittorelli, Translation from, 195.

Waltz, The, 272.
'Well! thou art happy,' 154.
'Were my bosom as false as thou deem'st it to be,' 221.
Werner; or, The Inheritance, 671.
'What are you doing now,' 229.
'What matter the pangs of a husband and father,' 238.
'What news, what news? Queen Orraca,' 225.
'When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home,' 236.
'When coldness wraps this suffering clay,' 220.
'When I roved a young Highlander,' 135.
'When Thurlow this damn'd nonsense sent,' 226.
'When we two parted,' 151.
'Who kill'd John Keats?' 237.
Windsor Poetics, 228.
Woman, To, 97.
'Would you go to the House by the true gate' 236.

'You ask for a "Volume of Nonsense,"' 236.
Youthful Friend, To a, 153.
'Youth, Nature, and relenting Jove,' 225.
Young Lady, Lines addressed to a, 99.
Young Lady, On the Death of a, 84.

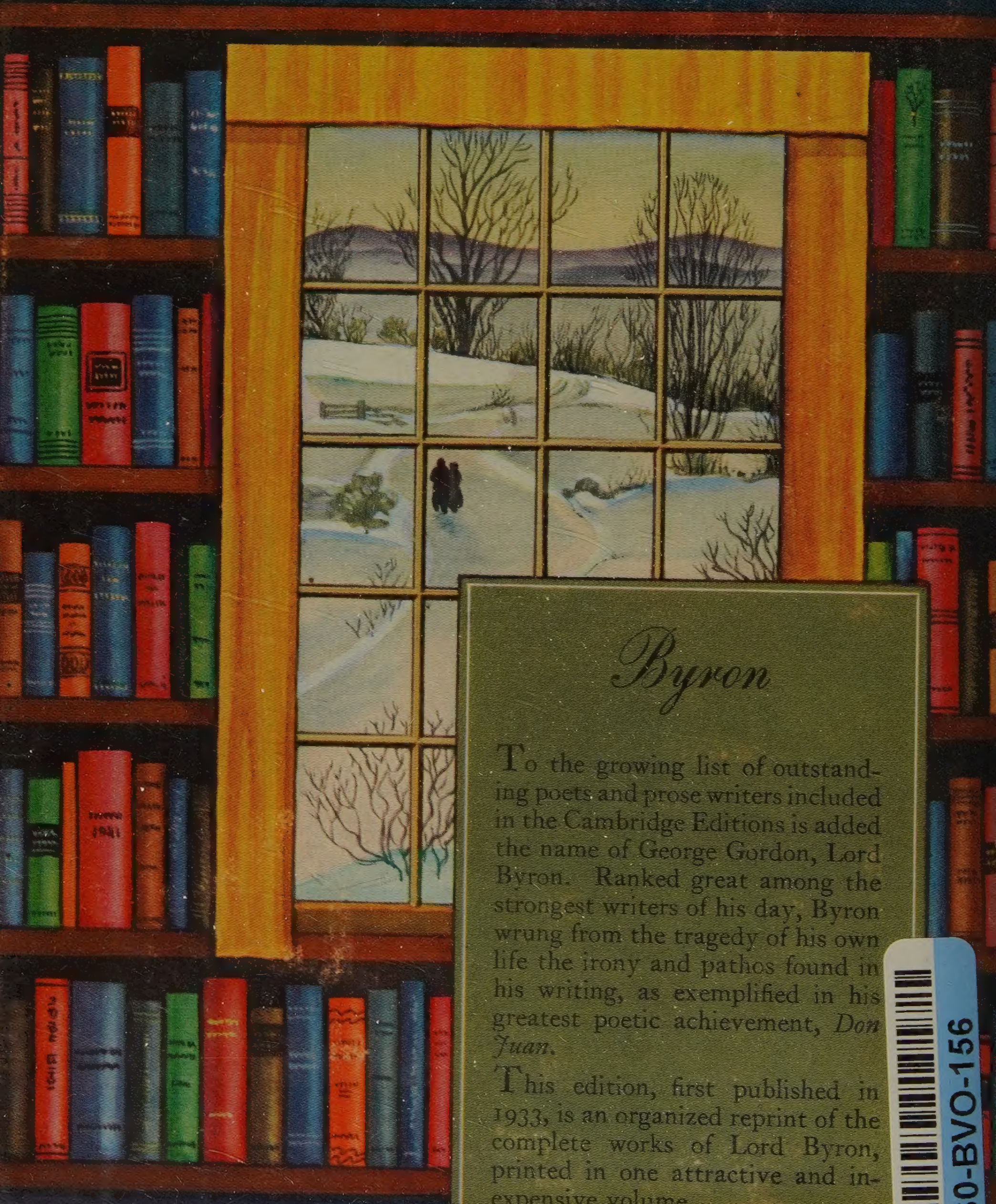
Cambridge Editions

The Cambridge Editions have hitherto been composed of complete one-volume editions of major English and American poets. The careful and scholarly editing attached to each volume has made the Cambridge name a byword in household and school libraries.

Now, after long consideration, the publishers have decided to add a number of prose writers to this imposing gallery of Cambridge poets. Each prose volume will contain the selected works of one man, chosen because his writings have had a continuing impact on present-day thinking. By the same token, contemporary writers will not be considered for this series, until there has been time for a later generation to test the value of what they wrote.

Outstanding scholars, with a demonstrated ability to write, will select and edit these editions with a comprehensive introduction and biographical sketch of each author. THE WORKS OF THOREAU, selected and edited by Henry Seidel Canby, is the first volume to be published. It sets the standard for each succeeding volume that will occupy a place on the Cambridge bookshelf.

Every volume will appear in a binding of attractive and enduring proportions, designed for the bookshelf rather than the pocket.



Byron

To the growing list of outstanding poets and prose writers included in the Cambridge Editions is added the name of George Gordon, Lord Byron. Ranked great among the strongest writers of his day, Byron wrung from the tragedy of his own life the irony and pathos found in his writing, as exemplified in his greatest poetic achievement, *Don Juan*.

This edition, first published in 1933, is an organized reprint of the complete works of Lord Byron, printed in one attractive and inexpensive volume.

S0-BVO-156